THE WHEEL FLAG OF INDIA

CHAKRA-DHVAJA

[चक्रध्वज]

VASUDEVA S. AGRAWALA.

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[Being a History and Exposition of the Meaning of the Dharma-Chakra and the Sārnāth Lion Capital]

BY

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26TH JANUARY, 1964

Published by :

© Prithivi Prakashan,
B 1/122 Dumraon Kothi,
Assi, Varanasi–5
[India]

Rs. 20-

Blocks By :
Shri Annapurna Block Works,
Varanasi.

Printed by :
Lakshmi Das
at the
Banaras Hindu University Press,
Varanasi-5.

To

MAHATMA GANDHI

Father of the Nation,

Who revived the Chakravartī-Yogī Ideal,

And set in motion The Wheel of Law,

Dharma-Chakra,

In Young India.

PREFACE

The Chakra-dhvaja or the Wheel Flag of India is the symbol of her civilisation as evolved through the ages. The whole Indian people have taken part in the emergence of the *Chakra* as a perfect token of their ideals and life. The present thesis explains the meaning of *Chakra* in the context of Indian Culture. The material is taken from Brāhmanical, Buddhist and Jaina literature, religion, art and philosophy. It has been shown that the worship of the *Chakra* as representing the supreme ideals underlying the cosmic manifestation on the one hand and of the individual life on the other has been a part of Indian tradition from the most ancient times. It is by divine providence that the *Chakra* has been accepted as the Flag of Modern India, as if Man under the Indian sky, and living on the Indian soil is to work out his destiny in accordance with the ideals symbolised by the *Chakra*.

The Cosmos is known as *Brahmāṇḍa-Chakra;* the World Order as *Saṁsāra-Chakra;* Human Life as *Bhava-Chakra;* the flux of men's actions as *Karma-Chakra;* the Revolving Wheel of Time as *Kāla-Chakra;* the Moral Order which governs the universal and the individual ordinances as *Dharma-Chakra.* The *Chakra* stands for the Perfect Cycle of Life which is at once beautiful and accessible to all, and therefore called *Sudarśana-Chakra,* the Wheel of the Divine Preserver of world and life, Bhagavān Vishṇu. The Divine is Transcendent Creator but His immanent presence becomes manifest as the dynamic *Chakra* or Revolving Wheel.

The *Chakra* has a two-fold aspect, viz., the centre and the circumference. There is rest at the centre and movement in the circumference, unity in the centre and diversity in the circumference. The complete *Chakra* presents a synthesis or harmony between the two. There is no better symbol than the Wheel, showing the law of unity in diversity. The *Chakra* implies an aggregation of spokes, all of which emanate from a common source and represent so many points on the periphery of the wheel. In the Indian tradition which began from the Ṛigveda the *Chakra* may have any number of spokes from one to one thousand. Mathematically the spokes demonstrate the principle of diversity as One, Two, Three......Infinity exemplified in manifestation. Each spoke is like a geometry of life or creativity, and it leads to mutual understanding to recognise that the Wheel of Human Life is comprised of a thousand spokes, *Sa-*

hasrāra-Chakra. Metaphysically human speech or sum total of ideas is designated as Thousand-syllabled, *Sahasrāksharā Vāk*; so also the dynamism of Life has a thousand spokes. The Buddhists conceived of the ideal *Dharma-Chakra* as having a thousand spokes which is set in motion through long aeons of time by innumerable *Buddhas*, *Arhats* and *Tathāgatas*. In the words of the Ṛigveda the Ageless Wheel revolves round the heaven of cosmic order (*varvarti chakraṁ pari dyāmṛitasya*, RV. 1.164.11). Vedic philosophy conceives of the cosmos, man's life, society and all patterns of activity in terms of the Revolving Wheel of which the underlying secret is Rhythm and Activity

The essential feature of the *Chakra* is cyclic movement (*Gati*) in a rhythmic order which brings with it great blessings and happiness; for example, the cycle of six seasons (*shaṭ-ṛitu-chakra*) presents a charming poetry of flowers, plants, singing birds and many other harmonies. The tiller of the soil witnesses the miracle of the Wheel in the sprouting of the seed and then its bursting into flowers and fruition. Boyhood, youth and age depend on the potency of the *Chakra*, unfolding in each life. Thus the meaning of the *Chakra* has a universal appeal. It stands for the Supreme Law of the cosmos and human life.

The Wheel on the Flag has been adopted from the four wheels carved on the round drum of the Sārnāth Lion Pillar. It is a great monument erected by Emperor Aśoka and in point of its significant symbolism it is unsurpassed in the whole range of Indian art. The Pillar consists of five component parts, viz., the shaft, the full vase (*Pūrṇa-Kumbha*) with its foliage, round abacus or drum carved with four wheels and four animals, four addorsed lions and a big *Dharma-Chakra* on the top. The smaller *Dharma Chakra* adopted for the National Flag is but one part of the symbolical plan of the Lion Capital.

It is obvious that much thought had gone into its making. This monograph aims at the discovery of the meaning of all the five parts of the Sārnāth Lion Capital. Much new material has been brought together for its interpretation from Vedic, Buddhist and Jaina sources. It has been clearly shown that the Lion Capital topped by the *Dharma-Chakra* is not a sectarian concept but was the fruit of a number of religious, philosophic and cult motifs, which received universal approval for thousands of years in the accumulated tradition of the Indian people. It is on this solid basis discovered here for the first time in a convincing manner that our understanding of the *Chakra-dhvaja* Flag of India should be based.

In short, the several prepositions established in the present thesis are as follows :

(1) The Pillar represents the *Axis Mundi*, the Cosmic Support, rising from its foundations in the earth, supporting the fourfold patterns of cosmic and individual manifestation and reaching its unified source in the topmost Wheel of Law. It is now evident that the Vedic idea of *Skambha* (Pillar) and of *Yūpa* (the Sacrificial Stake) with their profound and many-sided significance, were exemplified in the free-standing pillars of ancient India.

(2) The first decorative element of the Lion Capital can by no means be interpreted as Indo-Persepolitan Bell. It is in every respect the *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* motif of ancient Indian art and religion, overflowing with luxuriant lotus petals.

(3) The carving on the round drum of four wheels and four animals is in no way parochial but covers a very wide range both in time and space. It has been shown for the first time that they illsutrate a metaphysical idea of world creation conceived as central Mount Meru, or Lake Mānasarovara, or *Anavatapta* Lake, or the central throne in the palace of a *Chakravartin*, each of them possessing the glory of four-fold ramifications following the four regions of space. The evidence about the belief in the association of the four great animals with the four quarters of space is quite surprising and comprehensive collected from more than fifty texts and sources spread over the last five thousand years and from such different parts of the world as India, Ceylon, Burma, Siam, Cambodia, Tibet, etc. It is a wide canvas both in time and space and is to be greeted as proof not only of the antiquity of the motif on the drum but also of its persistent continuity.

(4) The four lions above the abacus facing in four directions are a continuation of the tetradic scheme followed in the conception of the Capital. They represent the temporal power of a *Chakravartī* ruler in his dominions upto the ends of the earth in the four cardinal points. Their meaning is explained in the *Siṁhanāda Chakravartī Suttanta* text of the Buddhist canon.

(5) The Sārnāth Pillar is the best example of the combination of the *Chakravartī* and the *Yogī* ideals. Thus the *Dharma-Chakra* on the top of the Pillar and on the heads of the four lions signified the religious and metaphysical ideals of a *Yogī* or supreme teacher of Law.

In this way a systematic and comprehensive analysis of all the elements of the Sārnāth Pillar Capital has been attempted here. It is hoped that it will remain a source book for the study of the meaning and ideals of the *Chakra-dhvaja*, the Wheel Flag of India. It may be noted that the original big wheel, *Mahā-Chakra,* placed on the heads of the lions was broken in an accident that overtook the Capital and therefore was not available to reconstruct a complete picture of all the component parts of the Pillar. It was under these circumstances that one of the wheels on the drum was adopted as the symbol of the National Flag, but the fact remains that in ancient times the *Chakra-dhvaja* derived its name after the big wheel on the top for which the Pillar together with its several parts was installed.

There is a little history about the evolution of the Flag in India. In the Vedas the Flag was known as *Ketu* and the gods moving in formation with Indra as their leader were described as *Ketumantaḥ :*

Udgharshantāṁ maghavan vājinānyud vīrāṇāṁ jayatāmetu ghoshaḥ/ Pṛithag ghoshā ululayaḥ ketumanta udīratāṁ, devā Indrajyeshṭhā Maruto yantu senayā.

"Let their fierce powers, O Maghavan, be heightened, and upward go the shout of conquering heroes. Apart and clear, let shout and roar and shriek and lamentation rise!
Let the gods led by Indra, let the Maruts with our army go." (AV. 3-19-6)

In the Mahābhārata the principal leaders of armies have their own Flags (*Ketus*) as indicated in this work. The Gupta emperors who re-established the national rule after three centuries of foreign occupation felt the necessity of having a National Flag and since they were devotees of Bhagavān Vishṇu they adopted *Garuḍa-dhvaja* as the State Flag that was in keeping with their *Parama-Bhāgavata* denomination.

In medieval times the rulers always had distinctive Flags, and we are indebted to Abul Fazl for a description of the Royal Flags under Akbar. We read of Sivaji having adopted *Bhagavā Jhaṇḍā* as his Flag. After the Maratha power the British brought their own Flag which remained in vogue for about two centuries.

When national leaders in India were fired with the spirit of reasserting country's independence and organising national forces they naturally felt the need of a National Flag. It was on August 7, 1906 that the first new National

Flag of India was unfurled in Greenpark, Calcutta. It was a flag in red, yellow and green colour. On the red rectangular strip were eight signs of an eight-petalled lotus ; on the yellow was written '*Vande Mātaram*' in Devanāgarī script ; on the green on one side was a pole with the Sun symbol by its side and on the other crescent moon with a star. The Pole also was conceived in red, black and white portions.

A similar Flag was hoisted in 1907 by Mrs. Kama and other exiled political workers in Paris with the difference that on the red strip there was only one eight-petalled lotus and seven stars, representing the *Sapta Ṛishis* or the Great Bear typical of the Seven Wise Sages of India who were the Founders of her civilisation.

At the time of the Home Rule Movement in 1917, Mrs. Annie Besant and Lokamānya Tilak jointly devised a National Flag ; in it there were four red strips and five green strips with a pole on the top of which was the Union Jack, implying that their demand for Home Rule was to be realised within the British Empire ; the people, however, did not take kindly to it.

In 1921, when Mahatma Gandhi became the country's foremost National Leader, it was in a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee at Vijayawada that a Flag was presented by an Andhra young man which was made of red and green strips. Gandhiji added a white one and thus the first Tricolour Flag was adopted. In 1931, at the Karachi Congress a Committee of seven was appointed to suggest the form of the National Flag. They suggested the Chakra on a saffron-coloured strip, but what was finally accepted consisted of a Tricolour Flag, saffron above, white in the middle and green below. On the white portion was printed the sign of the Spinning Wheel. This continued to be the National Flag until July, 1947.

When India won her Independence in 1947, the question of the form of the National Flag came up for a final decision. There were many ideas. Finally Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru out of his intuitional insight moved a resolution adopting the National Flag in its present *Chakra-dhvaja* form. [See Appendix VIII for the Resolution and Pt. Nehru's Speech in the Constituent Assembly.]

The Wheel Ensign on the *Chakra-dhvaja* Flag is, as we have shown, linked to the long Indian tradition as it evolved in her religion, philosophy, cult-worship and universal popular beliefs. The Wheel has twenty-four spokes which symbolise the metaphysical basis of cosmic manifestation or the nature of the

material world, i.e., the reality of human life. It is comprised of the following elements :—

(1) Primordial *Prakṛiti* or Infinite Universal Nature in which all men of science and philosophy have their faith, and all creatures have their being ;

(2) *Mahat-Tattva*, i.e., Universal Intelligence or *Buddhi ;*

(3) *Ahaṅkāra*, i.e. the individual consciousness or the principle of egoistic assertion which makes every individual what he is, with all the potentiality of his life's expression ;

(4) *Manas*, Mind as the consciousness-principle synthesising the sense-data ;

(5-9) Five Cognitive sense organs ; (*Jñānendriya*) ;

(10-14) Five motor sense organs (*Karmendriya*) ;

(15-19) Five subtle entities of the five-fold manifesting principles or forces known as *Pañcha Tanmātrā*, viz., sound (*Śabda*) which is the attribute or quality of *Ākāśa*, touch (*Sparśa*) of air, form (*Rūpa*) of light (*Tejas*), flavour (*Rasa*) of waters (*Āpaḥ*) and smell (*Gandha*) of the earth. The five gross elements of Matter are distinguished by their subtle qualities which are the real forces or energy-vibrations behind visible matter.

(19-24) Five gross elements of Matter through which the previous set of energy-vibrations become concretised. These are known as the *Pañcha-Mahā-Bhūtas*, viz., ether, air, fire, water and earth.

In one word the *Chakra* is the perfect symbol of the cosmos and of human life, i.e., of Man (*Purusha*). The Bhāgavatas therefore named it as *Chakra-Purusha* or the human symbol of their *Mahā-Nārāyaṇa Vishṇu.*

It is the complete symbol of the majesty of human life in its twofold aspect of *Jñāna* and *Karma*, ideas and action, or thoughts and deeds. What Man conceives and what he dares are the two halves of the revolving Wheel of Life, both for individuals and nations.

I feel grateful to the scholars whose views on the symbolism of the Lion Capital I have cited as Appendices at the end of this monograph. I am indebted to Sri Shivkumar for the line drawings and also for organising the illustrations, and also to my son Prithvi Kumar for seeing the book through the press. My

thanks are due to the Director General of Archaeology for loan of photographs of the Four Animals on the Lion Capital and on the Moon-Stones at Amaravati. My special thanks are due to Sri Pramoda Chandra who obtained for me a photo-copy of Przyluski's French paper, *Le Symbolisme du Pilier de Sarnath* published in the *Linossier* II, and to Father Joseph van Troy who kindly translated it into English at very short notice, as a result of which I was able to accommodate it in Appendix VII after the main text had been printed. It was rather a lacuna that I was not able to use Przyluski's material of great value, since it was nowhere available to me in the libraries of this country. I am now happy that the views of such scholars as Smith, Sahani, Rowland and Przyluski have been brought together at one place which enables a better understanding of the meaning of the Aśokan *Chakra-dhvaja*. I also owe an obligation to Director of Archaeology, Gwalior Museum for loan of the photograph of the Udaigiri Lion Capital (now in the Gwalior Museum) ; Superintendent, Indian Museum (Archaeological Section) for the photograph of the steatite plaque from Akra which is so little known ; Rai Krishnadas, Director, Bharat Kala Bhavan for the loan of the photograph of Bengal Kanthā cloth. Babu Lakshmidas, Manager, B.H.U. Press deserves my best thanks for the neat and quick printing of the text and line drawings, and Sri Surendra Bhargava of the Bhargava Bhushan Press for the plates. My teacher, Professor Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji contributed a small paper on the Sārnāth Lion Capital from which I derived benefit. As Superintendent of Museums in the Department of Archaeology while I was in-charge of the Sārnāth Museum, the few remaining fragments of the big *Dharma-Chakra* came to my notice and I had a complete replica of the same reconstructed in stucco of which a photograph is being published here. [Fig. 6 a] This gives an idea of the Pillar as it was conceived and originally put up by its author Aśoka himself.

While discussing the origin of the Mauryan polish we had pointed out it to be a technique produced by Indian workmen of which the formula must have been quite simple. Since writing the above we also found references to recipes for producing this high polish on ceramics known as Northern Black Polished Ware (C. 600-200 B.C.) which we have discussed in our book *Indian Art* (pp. 108-109 ; *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*, 15.3.15 ff.). This surmise has been recently confirmed by the production of the Mauryan polish on Chunār sandstone under experiments conducted by Śrī Skanda Kumar and Śrī Mahendra Nath of Lucknow. A specimen of the same has been placed

in the hands of Śrī C. Sivaramamurti, Keeper, National Museum, New Delhi for public view. It is claimed by these modern experts that the same bright polish could be reproduced on even a big sculpture similar to the Lion Capital.

I am happy in being able to publish this illustrated text on the meaning of the Lion Capital and the *Chakra-dhvaja* Flag of India, and to dedicate it to Mahatma Gandhi, Father of the Nation.

VASUDEVA S. AGRAWALA

January 26, 1964

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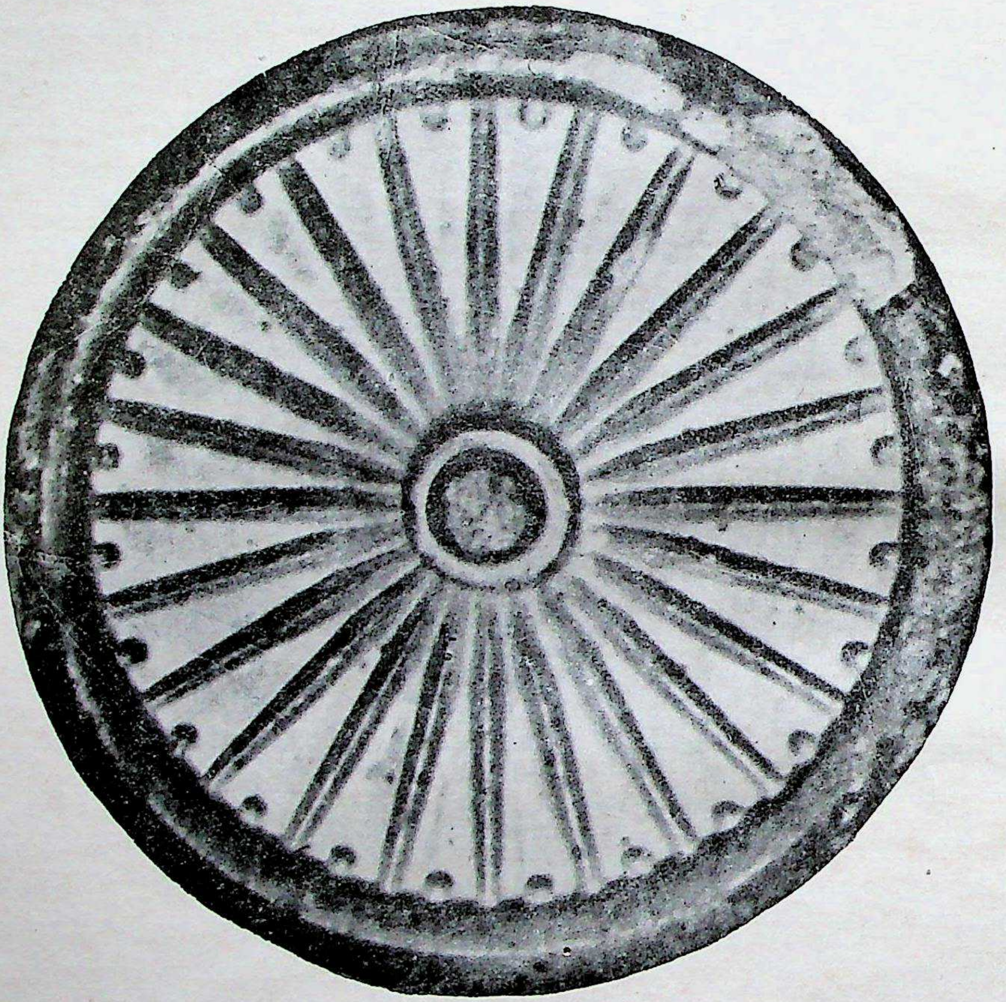
PT. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU ON THE WHEEL-FLAG

"But what type of wheel should we have ? Our minds went back to many wheels which had appeared in many places and which all of us have seen, the one at the top of the capital of the Aśoka column and in many other places. That wheel is a symbol of India's ancient culture, it is a symbol of the many things that India had stood for through the ages. So we thought that this Chakra emblem should be there and that wheel appears. For my part I am exceedingly happy that in this sense indirectly we have associated with this flag of ours not only this emblem but in a sense the name of Aśoka, one of the most magnificent names not only in India's history but in world history. It is well that at the moment of strife, conflict and intolerance, our minds should go back towards what Aśoka stood for.

If India had not stood for something very great, I do not think that India could have survived and carried on its cultural traditions in a more or less continuous manner through these vast ages. It carried on its cultural tradition, not unchanging, not rigid, but always keeping its essence, always adapting itself to new developments, to new influences.

"We thought of a flag which was beautiful to look at. We thought of a design for a flag which would in its combination and in its separate parts would somehow represent the spirit of the Nation, that mixed spirit and tradition which has grown up through thousands of years in India. So we devised this Flag. Perhaps I am partial but I do think that it is a very beautiful Flag to look at purely from the point of view of artistry, and it has come to symbolise many other beautiful things, things of the spirit, things of the mind, that give value to the individual's life and to the nation's life, for a nation does not live merely by material things, although they are highly important".

———



वर्वर्ति चक्रम् ।

Chakra on the Abacus of the Sārnāth Capital

CHAKRA-DHVAJA

OR

THE WHEEL-FLAG OF INDIA

[चक्रध्वज]

NAME AND MEASUREMENTS:

The word *Chakra-dhvaja* was used in ancient times for the flag marked by a *Chakra* or Wheel. The present Mauryan pillar at Sārnāth was once topped by a Lion-capital which in itself was crowned by a *Chakra*, hence it would be justified to give it the name *Chakra-dhvaja*. To the west of the Main Shrine (*Gandha-Kuṭī*) stands *in situ* an inscribed stone stump, 6 ft. 8 ins. high, being the lowermost portion of a column which was once about 50 ft. high. The shaft was 37 ft. as known on the basis of the fragments found near the pillar. The Lion-capital on its top measured 7 ft. and the wheel 32 ins. The portion of the pillar embedded in the ground is rough and rests on a large flat stone, 8 ft. by 6 ft. by 18 ins. The shaft of the pillar is slightly tapering with a diameter of 2 ft. 4 ins. at the base and 1 ft. 10 ins. at the top. The measurements may be set out as below :— Fig. 1

Height of the stump *in situ*	6 ft. 8 ins.
Total height including all the fragments or broken pieces of the shaft	37 ft.
Height of the Lotus	2 ft.
Height of the abacus	1 ft. 1½ in.
Height of the Lions	3 ft. 9 ins.
Height of the *Dharma-chakra*	2 ft. 8 ins.
Internal diameter of the *Dharma-chakra*	2 ft. 5 ins. to 2 ft. 1 in.
Width of the rim of the Wheel	3.65 ins.
Thickness of the rim	Varies from 2.65 ins. at the inner end to 1 in. at the outer end.

There was a square mortise hole in the centre of the top between the lion-heads, its diameter above being 8 ins. and at bottom 6.75 ins. and depth 3.5 to 4 ins.

The pillar and the capital are made of the best buff Chunār sandstone with black specks. The eyes of the lions were once studded with jewels for the retaining of which metallic pins were inserted in tiny holes bored in the upper lids. In one of the lion figures occupying the space above the elephant and bull the metallic pins have still been preserved.

Figs. 6-7 The *Mahā-chakra* surmounting the pillar was once inserted by a tenon into the square mortise hole. It fell down and now the Capital is seen without the wheel, but five fragments of the rim of the wheel and three of the spokes were found in the course of excavation. It has been possible to reconstruct a plaster cast of the original wheel. This was done under my own direction as Superintendent of the Museums Branch, Archaeological Survey of India. This reconstructed figure shows that the original wheel had 32 spokes or better 32 radii. The abacus or round drum is 2 ft. 10 ins. across and decorated with four *Chakras* of smaller size each with 24 spokes or 24 radii. These face in the four cardinal directions (*Mahā-diśā*) like the four lions seated back to back above them. Between each pair of *Chakras* is a racing animal,
Figs. 2-5 vigorous and full of animation as follows:

East—Lion, South—Elephant, West—Bull, North—Horse.

The whole pillar was carved out of three solid blocks of stone, one for the shaft, another for the capital and the third for the *Mahā-chakra* above.

COMPONENT PARTS:

Analysed on the basis of form, the whole monument is comprised of the following components:—

1. Undressed foundation block which supports the shaft, and into which a portion of the shaft is inserted.
2. The shaft (*Stambha-yashṭi*) or the tall tapering column.
3. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with large *Padma-kośa* shown in the form of large overflowing inverted petals (*Nīlotpala-patra*).
4. Round drum or abacus (*Aṇḍa* or *Dik-maṇḍala* or *Chakra-vāla*) carved with four Great Animals and four *Chakras*.
5. Four addorsed lions.
6. The Great Wheel (*Mahā-chakra*).

From the point of view of architectural fixation the arrangement adopted by the master caftsman has justified itself in the form of this and similar other pillars standing in position for more than two thousand years. The Sārnāth-Pillar also would have stood firm in that position as indicated by its stump but for some unusual mishap or natural accident which broke the pillar and hurled the ponderous capital to the ground by which the crowning wheel being the most delicate of all the parts was damaged in splinters, but the capital with its lions, abacus and lotus stood the impact quite well. We have in it today one of the most well preserved sculptural monuments in this country.

TECHNICAL EXECUTION AND POLISH:

As a piece of sculptural art the Sārnāth Capital has been the object of admiration from early times. Its shining polish makes a first appeal to every visitor. Yuan Chwang, the celebrated Mokshāchārya pilgrim from China, who visited India in the time of Harsha (630—645) and may have come to Sārnāth about 634—635 A.D., writes: "To the south-west of the Buddhist Temple was a ruinous old stone *Stūpa* built by Aśoka of which a 100 ft. still remained above ground. In front of this was a stone pillar about 70 ft. high, which had the softness of jade and was of dazzling brightness. This pillar was at the spot at which the Buddha, having attained enlightenment, first preached his religion". [Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travel in India*, Vol. 2, p. 50]. This is a correct factual account based on first-hand information. The *Stūpa* nearby which was seen by him was the so-called Jagat Singh *Stūpa* (now pulled down), the Great Temple was the Gandha Kuṭī where Buddha actually stayed and which was greatly enlarged in the Gupta period, as Yuan Chwang saw it and in the lap of the angle formed by these two stood the Lion-capital pillar. The testimony of Yuan Chwang about the jade-like polish receives universal approbation. It is apparent from the study of other surviving monuments of the Mauryan period in the form of pillars, railing, parasol and rock-cut caves that it was an age when such high polish on stone was in great favour. The interior of the Lomas Ṛishi cave in the Barabar hill near Bodha Gaya excavated in the time of Aśoka shows the highest perfection of polished lithic surface. The monolithic railing at Sārnāth itself, which is said to have rested on the top of the Jagat Singh *Stūpa* round its *harmikā*, the fragments of parasol from the Mahā-chetiya at Sānchī and the Rāmpurvā Bull capital, and finally the Sārnāth Lion-capital proclaim

in glorious terms the special achievement of the sculptor in producing very high polish of golden splendour on the buff-coloured sand stone of the Chunār quarries. This fondness for bright polish is seen even on the ceramics of the Mauryan age in the pottery known as the Northern Black Polished Ware. Basins, and bowls of many shapes have been found at sites distributed from Taxila to Maski in Hyderabad, in black, blue, violet, sparkling gold and other tinges and hues of the most pleasing varieties. Actual reference is made to such ware in an old Jaina text *Bṛihat Kalpa Sūtra* (Gāthās 491-528), where the monks have been advised to preserve it after using as a rare commodity. In the *Mahābhārata* the burning (*jvalamāna*) lustre (*Varchas*) of this polish (*Prabhā*) is said to compare with the radiance (*Bhāsvara prabhā*) of the Sun (*Sabhā Parva,* 3.21). The architect named Maya of the Asuras is credited with the building of an assembly hall in which he employed the same crystal-like material as had been used for the Assembly Hall of the Asura king Vṛishaparvan (*Sabhā Parva,* 3.16, *Sphāṭika dravya*). To visitors it looked like a hall built of shining semi-precious stones (*Divyā maṇimayī Sabhā,* 3.17). The incidence of this special polish is peculiar to the Mauryan age, since, as we come to the Śuṅga period, the polish on stone disappears. The technique of producing this polish is said to be a lost secret, but it appears that as practised by the Indian workmen its process must have been of a simple character in which there was no trade secret. This process appears to have consisted in intense rubbing and burnishing by hand labour with the use of some abrasive powder. We often find the use of two techincal terms *Ghṛishṭa* and *Mṛishṭa* (Prakrit, *Ghaṭṭha-maṭṭha*) which seem to have done the trick of producing this polish which reflected like the surface of a mirror (*Ayaṁsa-talopama*=Sanskrit *Ādaraśa-talopama, Aupapātika-sūtra,* Sūtra 5). The walls and roofs of the rooms and corridors of palace described in the *Mahā Ummagga Jātaka* are said to be of dazzling polish.

The question of the origin of this polish either from the indigenous tradition of India or imported by workmen from outside is a rather involved one and we need not go into it in details here. Suffice is to say that there was hardly a secret in its production, since it was only a matter of taste, as is often seen in the style and technique of art from age to age. We also know that the ancient practice as supported by the foundation charters of the palaces of Darius at Susa and Persepolis was to invite skilled artists working in various media from many a country wherever they could be summoned from and

Indian artists also from Gandhāra were invited to Iran. The fact remains that the high aesthetic reaction produced by Mauryan Art depends, not only on its polish. There are several other factors specially present in the Lion-capital. e.g. harmony of its component parts, symmetrical arrangement, detailed attention to the carving of details of each one of them, blending of realistic charm with idealistic delineation, vigorous naturalism and an inspired eagerness of the artists to create a really beautiful form and design of ineffable charm. Here is something of a grand vision which touches the spiritual cord of a true art lover. There is something in the Sārnāth Pillar capital appeals to the soul, speaking a propound language eloquent with meaning. It appears that an immortal idea has been captured in a magnificent form for ever. The form of experession is dominant and conquering. In the eyes of Marshall: "The Sārnāth Capital, on the other hand, though by no means a master-piece, is the product of the most developed art of which the world was cognisant in the 3rd century B.C.—the handiwork of the one who had generations of artistic effort and experience behind him. In the masterful strength of the crowning lions, with their swelling veins and tense muscular development, and in the spirited realism of the reliefs below, there is no trace whatever of the limitations of primitive art. So far as naturalism was his aim, the sculptore has modelled his figures direct from nature and has delineated their form with bold faithful touch; but he has gone more than this; he has consciously and of set purpose infused a tectonic conventional spirit into the four lions, so as to bring them into harmony with architectural character of the monuments, and in the case of the horse on the abacus he has availed himself of a type well known and approved in western art. Equally mature is the technique of his relief work. In early Indian, as in early Greek sculpture, it was the practice, as we shall presently see, to compress the relief between two fixed planes, the original front plane of the slab and the plane of the background. In the reliefs of the Sārnāth capital there is no trace whatever of this process; each and every part of the animal is modelled according to its actual depth without reference to any ideal front plane, with the result that it presents the appearance almost of a figure in the round which has been cut in half and then applied to the background of the abacus". (*The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. I, p. 562—3).

The appreciation by Marshall is balanced but halting. The Sārnāth capital is undoubtedly a master-piece, a work of art produced by a genius who had reached the end of technical perfection and whose mind

had touched the highest pedestal of ideas. If this rarest work of art is not a master-piece what else can the connotation of the world be. In the opinion of Vincent Smith, Marshall does not seem to be correct in his aesthetic assessment: "It would be difficult to find in any country an example of ancient animal sculpture superior or even equal to this beautiful work of art, which successfully combines realistic modelling with idealistic dignity, and is finished in every detail with perfect accuracy. The bas-reliefs on the abacus are as good in their way as the noble lions in the round. The design, while obviously reminiscent of Assyrian and Persian proto-types, is modified by Indian sentiment, the bas-relief being purely Indian. Sir John Marshall's conjecture that the composition may be the work of an Asiatic Greek is not supproted by the style of the relief figures. The ability of an Asiatic Greek to be present in Indian animals so well may be doubted." (*A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon*, p. 19).

Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy also pays unstinted tribute to the artistic nobility of this great monument: "Of the numerous extant examples the finest is that of Sārnāth erected on the traditional site of the First Turning of the Wheel of Law. The shaft is of plain polished sandstone, circular in section and slightly tapering; the capital consists of four addorsed lions, which originally supported a *Dhamma-cakka* or Wheel of the Law, resting on an abacus bearing in relief an elephant, horse, bull and lion separated by four small *dhamma-cakkas*, below which is the inverted lotus forming the "bell". As in other typical examples of Aśokan art the cutting and polishing of the surface are executed with extraordinary precison and accuracy; not only is great technical skill displayed in this respect, but the art itself is of an advanced and even late type with quite realistic modelling and movement". (*History of Indian and Indonesian Art*, p. 17-18).

The several factors in the technique of carving and polish are effectively brought out in the criticism offered by Percy Brown which is marked both by scholarly analysis and knowledge and a connoisseur's sympathetic understanding: "For the quality of the workmanship in their production there can be nothing but praise, the bold contours of the figures in the round, the subtle modelling of the relief, and the unerring confidence of the chiselling being remarkable. In sharing the credit for these masterpieces, it is felt that the symbolism and imanation, their spiritual message so to speak, was supplied by the Indian mind while most of the technical skill, together with certain decorative elements, were the work of the imported craftsmen. But the brilliant polish which gives such

a finality to the work was the result of Indian thought and labour, as there is evidence of an indigenous aptitude in this aspect of the stone-cutter's art. As a proof, few objects could be more delicately wrought or highly polished than the crystal reliquary from the Piprahwa *stūpa*, which has been assigned to this epoch, and was the handiwork of a *pāsāṇa-koṭṭaka* or hereditary stone-cutter. The lustrous finish of the crystal was obtained by the laborious application of an agate burnisher, and somewhat the same process was adopted in the pillars and other sandstone objects. In completing their handiwork with this glazed effect the Asokan artificers were following the procedure of all early stone-workers, as the aim for instance of the 12th dynasty Egyptian masons was a "glassy surface", while the ideal stonework of the Greeks is described in the Homeric poems as "polished shining-glistening". It is doubtful, however, whether the creations of any of these great building nations could compare in this particular respect with the brilliant enamel-like finish obtained by the Mauryan craftsmen. So striking is its appearance that in the fifth century it excited the admiration of that observant Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien, accustomed as he must have been to the famous polished lapidary of his own countrymen, for he writes that it was 'shining bright as glass'. And even in spite of over two thousand years of the most destructive climatic conditions these monuments retain much of their highly glazed surface at the present day". (*Indian Architecture, Buddhist and Hindu*, Second Edition, p. 12.)

THE GREAT WHEEL IN INDIAN TRADITION :

Whatever be the modern assessment of the merits of the Sārnāth Lion-capital, from the approach of Indian aesthetic canon which seeks beauty both in form and meaning, it is a complete formulation of the four elements which inhere in all great creations of art. It is rich in Form (*Rūpa*) marked by the most pleasing reality and perfect carving and modelling visible in art form. So far as the Rhythm (*chhanda*), which an artist may bring into his *Sādhanā*, is concerned the Lion-capital is a vibrant expression from top to bottom of intense concentrated dynamism controlled from an unmanifested centre, from which the lines of forces emanate and flow as the artist willed them in vertical and encircling planes. From the point of view of Meaning (*artha*) the *Chakradhvaja* with its elaborate symbolism is pregnant almost with epic contents and represents in a full and effective manner the soul of India as reflected in the Vedic, Jaina and Buddhist traditions over many centuries in the silent and joyous consciousness

of the people. There is no cult allegiance here in the symbolism of the *Mahā-chakra* and its accessories like the four lions, four animals, *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* and the lotus. Here one is face to face with an acclamation to the single unmanifested and undifferentiated divine phenomenon and its creation in the form of the manifested and differentiated trinitarian *loka-sṛishṭi* or the appearance of the visible world in a four-fold form and on three levels. The lion capital, as we shall explain in detail, was not an isolated event but linked to a long past and to an equally long future. We may trace the history of the metaphysical ideas symbolised by this representation of the *Mahā-chakra* from a time about 20 centuries before Aśoka to a period of about the same extended length after him. These various strands of symbolism are documented in Indian literature, philosophy and art and belong essentially to the whole Indian *Weltanschauung* beginning from the Vedas to the age of Vālmīki and from him to Keśava Dāsa. The meaning of this symbolism extended widely also in space ranging from Tibet to Burma and Ceylon including within its orbit, of course, the sculpture and painting of India. This richness of *Artha* or contents is a feature which brings the Lion-capital so near to our heart and makes it a source of permanent joy for the spirit. Where else do we find a monument or an image so simple, so eloquent, so subtle, and so pregnant with ideas about the cosmos, its source, its boyant life-force, its dynamism regulated by the rotating Wheel of Time, its four-fold archetypal life-pattern and above all the supreme divine principle symbolised as the Great Wheel under many names, e.g. *Dharma-chakra, Sudarśana-chakra, Bhava-chakra, Mahā-Kāla-chakra* and *Brahma-chakra* itself. This aspect of the question we shall take up in detail in the subsequent pages.

THE GREAT WHEEL IN INDIAN ART:

The Lion Capital is the gift of Maûryan art, but it is not an isolated phenomenon. Such a magnificent idea executed with such perfection and so centrally erected at a hallowed spot in the outskirts (*Bāhyodyāna*) of ancient Vārāṇasī evoked deep response in the minds of the people. These stirrings were made visible in a crop of similar or kindred monuments which may be studied as a class by themselves.

SĀNCHĪ PILLAR (SIṀHA-STAMBHA):

Fig. 13 The place of honour amongst these subsequent adaptataions is taken by the Lion-capital at Sānchī. It was erected by Aśoka near the south gateway of the

Great Stūpa. The broken stump remains *in situ*, and some broken lengths of the shaft lie along side as at Sārnāth, and the capital and crowing lions are in the local museum. "When intact, the pillar was about 42 ft. in height and consisted of a round and slightly tapering monolithic shaft with bell-shaped foliate capital surmounted by a cable necking, above which was an abacus supporting the fore-fronts of four magnificent lions, possibly intended to typify Śākya-siṁha, the Lion of the Śākya race. The bell-shaped capital and crowning lions were a single block of stone. The abacus was adorned with four "honey-suckle" motifs, separated one from the other by pairs of geese, symbolical perhaps of the flock of the Buddha's disciples. In point of both style and technique the four lions exhibit a very close affinity to those of the Aśokan pillar at Sārnāth. The Sārnāth example supported a "Wheel of Law" (*Dharma-chakra*) rising above the heads of the four lions, whereas at Sānchī there was no such emblem. Lions, capital and shaft are finished and polished to the same glass-like lusture that distinguish all the carved stone work of Aśoka's time". (Marshll, *Monuments of Sanchi*, pp. 25—26).

The Sārnāth and Sānchī examples may be treated as a class by themselves. On the basis of the perfection of technical skill and art, and similarity of the several component parts revealed by the two examples, the Sārnāth pillar however is much superior in the eyes of all critics. "Of all the sculptures of Aśoka's reign, the Lion Capitals of his two pillars at Sānchī and Sārnāth are immeasurably the finest. Though not themselves of equal merit, they stand in a class by themselves. The resemblance between the two is obvious : a bell-shaped foliate capital supporting a circular abacus, on which stand four lions addorsed—that is the design of both, and their style, too, is in correspondingly close accord. On the other hand, there are notable differences of detail. In the Sānchī example, the bell capital is not so squat as it is at Sārnāth, and it is better adapted, therefore, to its position on the top of a lofty pillar, where it was necessarily fore-shortened. In the Sānchī example, again, the necking takes the form of a cable moulding ; in the Sārnāth one, it is plain ; in the former the abacus is noticeably thinner than in the latter, and is adorned with four pairs of geese, alternating with conventional honey-suckle pattern, in the latter it is adorned with four "Wheels-of-the-Law" (*Dharma-chakra*) alternative with the four animals that guard the Four Quarters : the horse, the elephant, the lion and the humped bull. In the former, the crowning feature was the group of four lions which stood alone on the abacus ; in the latter, the lions supported a Wheel of the Law

2

which rose between them. Nor are these the only differences. Although the pillars are identical in material (hard close-grained buff sandstone of Chunār) and technique, and correspond closely in style, the Sānchī capital misses the subtle artistry, the finer feeling for form of the other. Both groups of lions exhibit the same tense muscular development, the same spirited realism combined with the same formal tectonic qualities, which the artist rightly introduced in order to harmonize them with the architectural character of the monument; but we cannot help remarking how much less true to nature, therefore, less vital and convincing is the modelling of the Sānchī beasts, how disproportionately broad and swelling their chests, how widely spaced their legs, how much more mechanical the treatment of their manes. That the original designs of the two capitals were the work of one and the same artist can hardly be disputed but the difference in workmanship makes it virtually certain that the actual carving of the Sānchī capital was done by some less gifted assistant. (Marshall, *Monuments of Sanchi*, Vol. I, pp. 88–9).

GUPTA CHAKRA PILLARS AT SĀNCHĪ:

Fig. 14 The reverberations of a monument like the Sārnāth Lion-capital and its double the Sānchī Lion-capital continued in the minds of the people for about seven centuries when in the Golden Age of the Guptas they recreated a similar pillar at Sānchī complete with the lotus, cable design, round abacus adorned in this case with birds and a lotus rhizome, four lions and a *Dharma-chakra* (Marshall, *ibid*, pl. 108A). Artistically inferior to its prototype it, however, is a complete replica of the formal elements and symbolism of the famous Sārnāth *Chakra-stambha*. An inscription on the sahft of this pillar gives the information that another pillar of Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi stood near it. Fortunately, this has also been found in which the lotus with inverted petals and the cable design serving as *Mekhalā* of the *Pūrṇa-Ghaṭa*, in which the lotus was placed, is faithfully repeated in a rather more explicit manner, and the same is sur-
Fig. 15 mounted by a square stone block carved with the railing design which corresponds to the abacus in the other pillars and this whole was topped by a standing figure of *Vajrapāṇi*. This proves that the tradition for erecting pillars with a symbolical meaning and dedicated to the Buddha evolved in new forms and continued in the imagination of the people. The idea had taken root in the soil and this indicates that it was not a foreign imposition but a creation of the Indian mind itself, otherwise it would have met the same fate as many a foreign motif of Gandhāra art which petered out in the course of a few centuries. Here at Sānchī

in the Gupta age, in the full resurgence of Indian motifs and ideas, the ancient lion capital reappears in many examples, even the pillars of the *Maṇḍapa* of the samll but attractive early Gupta shrine have the similar shaft, inverted lotus, cable-filleted necking and block abacus surmounted by a second squared lion cap, the animals on which have double bodies meeting in a single head at each corner, with a plam tree in the middle of each face, obviously copied from the neighbouring gateway sculptures (Marshall, *ibid*, p. 57).

At Udaigiri, about five miles from Sānchī, stood another pillar of which only the lion capital has been found. It is an exact replica of the Aśokan Lion-capital of Sānchī, but executed in the Gupta period. The capital consists of a Pūrṇa-ghaṭa with long inverted leaves, a cabled necking, a round abacus, and four addorsed lions. In the centre of the lion-heads is a socket similar to that of Sārnāth in which most probably the Dharma-chakra symbol was inserted but which is now missing. This monument is no doubt an imitation of its Mauryan proto-type but there is an element of originality also in the scenes depicted on the round drum showing groups of human figures. **Fig. 16**

OTHER CHAKRA PILLARS IN RELIEF:

Apart from the free-standing examples of *Chakra-stambha* or Wheel-topped pillars we find their representation with the three major elements, viz., lotus, four addorsed lions or other animals, and *Chakra* as being a frequently repeated motif in the railings and gateways of the *Stūpas* at Sānchī. For example, on the west face of pillar 5 of the ground balustrade of *Stūpa* II we find the *Dharma-chakra* resting on the heads of four lions and the latter surmounted on an abacus supported above a lotus bearing *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* on the top of an eight-sided shaft (Marshall, *ibid*, *pl*. LXXIV, fig. 5*a*), and a replica of the same on pillar 3 with a remarkable difference that a man and a woman are shown round the two sides of the shaft standing with folded hands offering worship to the pillar by circumambulating it. This surely points to the cult of the *Chakra-stambha* being a regular feature of the religious belief of the people in the age of the early *Stūpas*. Not only was this cult worship true in the case of *Chakra-dhvaja* but even pillars surmounted by single animal figures were offered the same adoration. A pillar relief depitcted on a corner railing from Mathurā, which may be placed also in the Śuṅga period, shows a *Siṁha-stambha* with a single animal being similarly worshipped by a *Dampatī* going round the pillar in *Pradakshiṇā* and touching the shaft with their hands (J 268, Lucknow Museum, fig. 2a-b of my **Fig. 24** **Fig. 25** **Fig. 39**

Guide Book to the Archaeological Section of the Provincial Museum, Lucknow). The other three panels on this pillar vividly depict the scenes of festivity, dance and music associated with this cult. It may be truly described as a *Thambha-maha* being no less important than the *Stūpa-maha* of ancient literature.

Fig. 29 On the south east-sector of the same balustrade of *Stūpa* II, pillar 44 repeats closely a *Chakra-stambha* of the same kind standing in a square *Vedikā* or railing similar to the previous two pillars. Its shaft is round and tapering and is thus closer to the Sārnāth original.

Fig. 28 One the Gateway pillar of *Stūpa* II, east pillar, south face, the artists of Sānchī have copied the Sārnāth proto-type or their own free-standing example with some more emphasis, viz., the presence of four men and women worshipping the *Chakra* pillar and two celestial beings throwing flowers.

Fig. 23 On the northern Gateway, the middle section of upper and middle architraves of *Stūpa* No. I, the cenral pillar depicts the same kind of *Chakra* with four lions, lotus, and a shaft inside a *Vedikā* adorned by two banners. The artists are obsessed with this motif which had become a recognised symbol of the *Dharma-chakra-pravartana*, or one of the four major events of Buddha's life.

Figs. 26-7 On the eastern Gateway in quite a similar position on the Great *Stūpa* the motif is repeated twice one above the other as if its repetition along with the *Bodhi* tree was considered specially meritorious. Just by its side on the middle section of the two architraves we find only the four lions without the *Chakra*
Fig. 22 but complete with shaft and lotus as on the independent Sānchī lion capital pillar described before (Marshall, *ibid*, *pl.* XL).

CULT OF CHAKRA WORSHIP:

Chakra-Maha—We have pointed out above that the worship of the *Chakra* was a well established cult known as *Chakra-Maha* similar to the *Stūpa-Maha* (worship of the *Stūpa*), *Rukkha-Maha* (worship of the *Bodhi* Tree and other sacred Trees), *Chūḍā-Maha* (worship of the crest of the Buddha), etc. As ancient religious cults they were of great popularity and wide distribution. About 30 such obscure religious folk-cults popular in ancient times are mentioned[1]. Amongst a large array of such festivals the relative importance

[1] For example, Yakkha Maha, Nāga M., Inda M., Chanda M., Sūraja M., Mukunda M., Khanda (Skanda) M., Dhanur M., Sāgara M., Nadī M., Avaṭa M., Taḍāga M., Rukkha M., Pabbata M., Brahma M., Koṭṭakiriyā M., Vishṇu M., Rudda M., Vessavana M., Thūba M., etc. See List in my book (in press) on *Ancient Indian Folk Cults* (in Hindi).

of the worship of the *Chakra* is forcefully demonstrated by its oft-repeated representation in early Indian art as at Bharhut, Sānchī, Bodhagayā, Amarāvatī, Mathurā etc.

On the Prasenajit pillar at Bharhut the worship of the *Dharma-chakra* is clearly depicted, the *Chakra* being installed in a pavilion with a high vaulted roof resting on pillars under a parasol (Cunninghum, *Bharhut, pl.* XIII). A similar scene of *Dharma-chakra* worship by nobles and princes occurs on plate XXXI. **Figs. 41-2**

We also find in Bharhut art a repetition of the old Sārnāth style of placing the *Dharma-chakra* on the heads of the four lions surmounting a lotus top on the head of a slender shaft and two male and female figures paying homage by folded hands, flowers and garlands (*ibid, pl.* XXXIV). **Fig. 21**

At Sānchī the number of scenes showing the cult of the *Chakra* is much greater, for it seems that the influence of the ideas and forms patronised by Aśoka was more keenly felt at Sānchī than elsewhere. We also find much greater variety in the depiction of the scenes. For example, *Chakra* on *Triratna* being worshipped (Marshall, pl. LXXIV); *Chakra* only on pedestal receiving homage (*ibid*, pl. LXXIX); worship of *Chakra* placed on *Triratna* and pedestal (*ibid*, XCV, XCVII); *Chakra* on Lion-capital (*ibid*, pls. XCII, XCV); *Chakra* in worship but on a long simple shaft (pl. XVIII, 32 spokes and deer also shown, as also on pls. LIV and LV). The presence of the deer offers firm proof that the artists had in mind the scene of Buddha's first sermon associated with the motif of Sārnāth *Chakra*. **Figs. 43-6**

We should remember that this particular aspect of the *Chakra* cult, viz., its association with Buddhism cannot be insisted upon too much. In Jainism a regular worship of *Chakra* had come from the earliest time and sculptures found from the Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā Jaina Stūpa bear witness to the deification of the *Chakra*. In art it had taken two forms, viz., a Chakra-topped standard shown on a block with side volutes placed on another block depicting four winged lions which itself was placed on a bulbous lotus or fluted full-vase with a girdle fastened round its neck and another on its base and this capital placed on the top of a six-sided tapering shaft, the basement of which rests on a sturdy bowl decorated with lotus petals and leaves. The name *Chakra-dhvaja*, Prakrit *Chakkajhaya*, must have been applied to the *Chakra* pillars of this description (*Āyāgapaṭṭa*, J 249, Smith, *Jaina Stūpa*, pl. VII, Agrawala, *Guide Book to the Archaeological*

Section of the Lucknow Museum, p. 5). This motif of the *Chakra-stambha* framing a Tīrthaṅkara image together with an *Ashṭamaṅgalaka Mālā* is repeated on another *Āyāgapaṭṭa* (J 252, Smith, *ibid*, pl. XI). Whereas on the former we find on one side a pillar with an elephant on top, on the latter that with a lion. It is apparent that the Jainas had as much deep religious feeling of reverence for these symbols as the Buddhists, and also the followers of the Vedic tradition whose beliefs about the *Chakra* will be discussed later.

Fig. 52 The other form that *Chakra* worship by the Jainas was given in their ancient art is shown in the depiction of a *Chakra-paṭṭa* on a tablet of homage. The whole *Āyāgapaṭṭa* is conceived in the form of a *Chakra* supported on the arms of eight Maidens of Space (*Ashṭadikkumārikā*), the whole encircled by a huge garland and having four Tritons or *Mahoraga* figures as supports in the corners. The enclosing bands on the four sides are occupied with auspicious symbols and eight *Siṁhikā* maidens (J 248 ; Smith, *ibid*, pl. VIII). The Jainas have not only retained the complex symbols of the earlier times but considerably re-inforced them from their own stock of expanding mytholgical symbolism of which the meanings were as real to the Jainas as to others.

Fig. 53 A still more convincing argument about the universal nature of these religious symbols is furnished by the *Svastika Paṭṭa* (called *Sothika Paṭa* in *Lüders List* No, 1287), found from the Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā and now preserved in the Lucknow Museum (*Guide Book*, pl. 6, Smith, pl. IX, *Āyāgapaṭṭa* No. J. 250). No one would argue that the *Svastika* was in any manner the monopoly of Jainas, as indeed, none of the auspicious signs like the *Śrīvatsa*, *Mīnamithuna*, *Vaijayantī* (triangle-headed standard), *Deva-gṛiha* (*Vimāna*), *Ratna-pātra*, *Nandipada Pūrṇa-Ghaṭa*, *Mahā-srak* (the great garland) which together constituted a group of the Eight Auspicious Signs, *Ashṭamaṅgalas*, could be claimed the exclusive possession of any one religious community. They were the creations of the soil and belonged to the whole people without distinction of race or faith. It is this open welcome that we find writ large on the face of ancient Indian art, religion and literature. In the case of hundreds of such motifs including the *Kalpa-vṛiksha*, *Kalpa-latā* and a host of tutelary divinities (*Vyantara Devatās*) we have to consider the *Chakra* symbol as one of this large alphabet which constituted a whole language of religious ideas common to the people through all times and places. Their universal aspect should never be lost sight of, otherwise the meaning of the symbol would be vastly curtailed, and instead of its serving as a pulsating centre from which many facets of meaning emanated

the symbol would become stereotyped and cut off from its eloquent source. As a matter of fact it is unfortunate that any one should introduce a foreign consideration in probing the meaning of such pre-eminent symbols or motifs of art as the *Svastika, Chakra, Śrīvasta, Indradhvaja, Nandipada,* etc. The whole Indian civilization stands in the background of our investigation into the meaning of these motifs and this should be the right approach in studying the *Chakra* symbol.

From the available evidence of early Indian art we find that in the making of these animal pillars (*Dhvaja* or *Ketu*) there was great freedom of choice and elasticity of combination. We have both addorsed animals which were technically known as *Saṁghāṭa*, like *Haya-Saṁghāṭa* (addrosed horses), *Gaja-Saṁghāṭa* (addorsed elephants), *Vyāghra-Saṁghāṭa* (addorsed lions), *Nara-Saṁghāṭa* (composite human-headed figures) etc. There could also be single figure of animals and also of other objects selected as the ensign on the pillars.

FLAGS OF EPIC HEROES :

In literature, attention is drawn to a long list in the *Mahābhārata* (Droṇaprava, 80. 1—29). The banners of the *Mahābhārata* heroes on the two sides were decorated with a number of animal figures and other objects called *Lakshma* or *Rūpa*. For example, the *Dhvaja* of Arjuna was adorned by a *Mahā-kapi* having the tail of a lion (*Siṁha-lāṅgula*) ; of Aśvatthāmā by a tailed lion ; of Karṇa by an elephant of golden girth ; of Kṛipāchārya by a bull (*Govṛisha*, like the great *Vṛishabha* of Śaṅkara) ; that of Vṛishasena by a golden peacock like that of Skanda ; of Śalya, king of Madradeśa, by a ploughshare (*Sītā*) ; that of Jayadratha by a boar (*Varāha*) ; of Saumadatti by a golden *Yūpa* ; of Śala by a large elephant (*Mahān Dvirada*) ; of Duryodhana by a bejewelled elephant (*Maṇimaya Nāga*) like the white elephant of Indra (*Śveta Mahā-nāga* of Devarāja) ; of Bhīshma by the five-speckled palm (*Tālena mahatā Bhīshmaḥ pañcha-tāreṇa ketunā*) ; of Droṇa by a *Kamaṇḍalu* placed on a golden *vedi* and also with the mark of a bow and arrow on it, etc. These banners are generally styled as *Ketu* and *Dhvaja* which were of great variety (*Bahuvidhākāra*). Indeed each one of them was assigned a particular symbol (*Rūpa-Lakshma*), colour (*Varṇa*) and name (*Nāma*) derived from the animal or object associated with it. They were decorated with garlands (*Kāñchanasrag-alaṅkṛitāḥ*, Droṇa. 80.4), as we find in the case of several of the *Chakras* depicted at Sānchī.

Each royal dynasty, king or hero, and so each religious teacher, had his own banner, the former standing as the ensign of temporal power of the earthly ruler or *Kshatriya* and the latter of the spiritual authority of the *Brahma* teacher. The homage to the Banner was indictive of the *Bhakti* voluntarily given to a person or his creed. As in literature so in art, we find a wide range of figures placed on the top of the pillars which may be designated both as *Stambhas* and *Dhvajas*. Aśoka gives to his pillars the general name of *Dharma-stambha* (*Devānaṁ piya piyadasi hevam āha etam eva me anuvekhamāne Dhaṁma-thambāni kaṭāni*, Pillar Edict Seventh, Delhi-Topra, line 23) or *Silā-thaṁbha*. He himself exercised his choice in the selection of animal figures either in groups or individually. Besides

Figs. 8-12 the four lions found on the Sārnāth and Sānchī capitals, we have other pillars of his time surmounted by a bull (*Govṛisha*) as in the case of Rāmpurvā pillar, or elephant as in the case of Saṅkisā pillar, or a single lion as on the Lauriā Nandangarh pillar. Yuan Chwang states to have seen a Horse-capital at Lumbinī, a Wheel-capital and an Bull-capital at Śrāvastī, a Elephant-capital at Rājagṛiha, Lion-capitals at Kapilavastu, Vaiśālī and Pāṭaliputra. The lead once given was followed liberally in subsequent times according to the inclination of those who wanted to erect such pillars for a religious or secular purpose. Imitations of Aśokan pillars in various versions so far as the animals on the top and the various components on the capital are concerned, have been found both at Bharhut and Sānchī as detailed above.

In the Brāhmanical tradition also we find actual specimens of Garuḍa-topped pillars called *Garuḍa-dhvaja* which shows that the use of the word *dhvaja* for such long shafts was in general use. This particular *Garuḍa-dhvaja* pillar was erected to God Vishṇu by a Bhāgavata Greek who had come as an ambassador to the court of a king at Vidiśā (*Devadevasa Vāsudevasa garuḍadhvaje ayaṁ kārite Heliodorena bhāgavatena diyasaputreṇa takshasilākena yona dūtena* J.B.B.R.A.S. p. 104). In ancient Vidiśā at the same time was erected another *Garuḍa-dhvaja* in the shrine of Bhagavān Vishṇu by Gautamīputra, a follower of the Bhāgavata Dharma (*Gotamīputena bhāgavatena bhagavato prāsāduttamas garuḍadhvaja kārito*). There seems to have been a custom for such religious pillars in this area of Vidiśā of which Sānchī also forms part. We have found remains of a *Makara-dhvaja* called *Makara-yashṭi* of which the capital only, showing the crocodile, is preserved. It was the well known banner of Kāmadeva. At Besnagar a palm-capital was also found. J. N. Banerji rightly thinks that the *Garuḍa-dhvaja*, the *Tāla-dhvaja* and the *Makara-dhvaja* were dedicated to the

three *Bhāgavata* deities, viz., Vāsudeva, Saṅkarshaṇa and Pradyumna, the last being an incaranation of Kāmadeva whose sign was the Makara. (*Development of Hindu Iconography*, p. 104). It may be noticed here that in practical life a cloth banner with the particular animal figure of the deity painted on it as well as a stone or wooden shaft topped by the animal figure in the round, or by the same carved in relief, served an equally useful purpose and they were all legitimate symbols of the deity that was worshipped.

ANCIENT VEDIC PILLARS:

The association of a pillar or of a *Dhvaja* with a religious shrine was a very ancient feature. It began in its original form with the Vedic sacrifice or *Yajña*. In each *Yajña* there was erected a *Yūpa* or sacrificial pillar in the centre of the *Mahā-vedi* conceived as the Navel of Immortality (*Amṛitasya Nābhiḥ*) or the centre of the universe (*Bhuvanasya Nābhiḥ*, RV. I. 164.35). This was generally of wood and in Vedic times often addressed as the *Great Vanaspati* with a hundred and thousand branches (*Saharavalśā, Śatavalśā*); but there were stone sacrificial pillars also erected on the spot where some notable sacrifice had been celebrated. This is shown by the two stone *Yūpa* pillars found near Vishrānt-ghāṭ from the bed of the Yamunā and now preserved in the Mathura Museum. They seem to have served as commemorative pillars after the Yajña was over. Several wooden *Yūpas* or sacrificial stakes quite as big as the Mathura pillars have been found at several places as Baḍvā (Kotah), Barnāla (Jaipur), Nāndsā (Udaipur), Kosam (Allahabada), Nagar (Jaipur), Bijaygarh (Bhartpur). The Brāhmaṇa texts prescribe an elaborate ceremony for making the wooden *Yūpas* and they were installed in the sacrificial ground as an essential part of the ritual. No example of a *Yūpa* from the Vedic age has survived by the very nature of the perishable material of which such pillars were made.

Fig. 61

Besides the *Yajña*, a pillar was also associated with a burial mound of earth or *Stūpa* which was raised on the spot of cremation or funeral pyre as a custom from the remotest antiquity. The *Ṛigveda* specifically refers to three things as a memorial for the dead, viz., the depositing of a figure of the Goddess *Pṛithivī* (*Ut te stabhnāmi pṛithivīm*), piling clods of earth (*tvat parīmaṁ logaṁ nidadhat*), and erecting a pillar (*etāṁ sthūṇāṁ pitaro dhārayantu*) on which it was supposed that God Yama, the Primeval Ancestor, took his seat (*Atrā Yamaḥ sādanā*, RV. X. 18.13). The burial mounds at Lauriā Nandangarh furnish proof about these three elements.

A golden figure of the Earth Goddess was actually found in mound II and a little below it a hollow shaft, 10″ in diameter, in which once an wooden shaft was placed. In mound III the shaft of a wooden pillar was actually found *in situ*. The pillar (*Sthūṇā*) was an essential part of the mound. It seems that this particular area where fifteen such mounds have survived, was considered to be of hallowed antiquity and Aśoka himself out of some special consideration selected it as a site for erecting a pillar at a distance of about 500 ft. This Aśokan
Fig. 11 column, tall and tapering and surmounted by a lion is locally known as *Laur Bābā*,
Fig. 56 i.e., the Pillar Deity, similar to the *Khām Bābā* of Besnagar, both *Laur* (Skt. *Lakuṭa*) and *Khām* (Skt. *Skambha*) meaning the same thing. The association of God Yama with the funeral pillar or of Vishṇu with the *Bhāgavata Garuḍa-dhvaja* pillar confers on this kind of monument a definite divine identity by which its rank as a deity was assured in the minds of the people. What Aśoka had in mind at Lauriā Nandangarh was repeated by him at Sānchī where in association with a *Stūpa* he erected the Sānchī pillar in front of the South Gateway of the Great Stūpa (*Mahā Chaitya*).

This association of a *Chaitya* with a pillar became so much established in popular tradition that when the *Chaitya* was transferred to a rock-cut exca-
Figs. 58-60 vation, as in the earliest *Chaitya* Halls found in Western India like Karle and Kanherī, the free-standing pillar in front of the façade of the cave also became an essential element of the architecture of the *Chaitya* Hall. As we have shown elsewhere an excavated rock cave was known as *Kīrti*, a wor dused in a Traikūṭaka copper-plate inscription found at Kanherī (*tāvat kīrtiḥ sthireyaṁ bhajatu*, *JBBRAS* V. p. 32, pl. XXVI, and my article, Kīrti, Kīrtimukha and Kīrtistambha, *Vāk*, 5, February 1957, p. 147).

PILLAR AS KĪRTI-STAMBHA :

These free-standing lofty pillars were, therefore, styled as *Kīrti-stambha*, i.e., a pillar associated with a *Kīrti* or rock-cut cave. Each *Kīrti* or excavated cave enshrined in its apsidal portion a stone *Chaitya* or *Stūpa*. In fact, the entire architectural planning of a *Chaitya Ghara* or *Chaitya* Hall was in the nature of a religious shrine called *Chaitya-Prāsāda* which included a *Garbha-gṛiha*, a *Maṇḍapa* and a *Pradakshiṇā-patha*. The religious nature of these *Chaitya*-pillars or *Kīrti-stambhas* can not be over emphasised. As shown by the *Pradakashiṇā* performed round such pillars by devotees holding their hands in *Añjali-mudrā*, by divine beings showering flowers, as pointed out above, it becomes certain that

the pillar cult was a reality like other religious cults and that the pillar was considered to be a deity in visible form. The *Kīrti-stambha*, therefore, standing in front of a *Chaitya* Hall was of as much sanctity as the *Chaitya* inside the cave. We have further proof of the religious character of such a pillar.

There was in Laṅkā a *Chaitya* dedicated to a goddess after whose name the religious shrine was called *Nikumbhilā Chaitya*. There a large pillar was planted which is mentioned as *Prāsāda-stambha* (*Prāsādasya mahāṅstasya stambhaṁ hemaparishkṛitam*, Sundara Kāṇḍa, 43.17). There are also literary indications that this *Chaitya-stambha* was originally the same as a *Yūpa* in the *Yajña*, for the *Mahābhārata* makes reference to a *Chaitya Yūpa*, i.e., a pillar on a *Chaitya* Mound. Kṛishṇa riding on Garuḍa is compared to a *Yūpa* pillar over a *Chaitya* giving an idea of the loftiness shown by this mutual placement (*chintayāmāsa kṛishṇo'tha garutmantaṁ sachābhyayāt/Kshaṇe tasmin sa tenāsīch-chaityayūpa ivochchhritaḥ*, Sabhā Parva, Poona, 22.22).

A special term found in a Karle cave inscription (No. 1, 7, 9,) is *Sasariro-thabo*, which in all probability was the name of a pillar erected on a mound with bodily relics buried inside it, more or less corresponding to the *Chaitya Yūpa*.

In the ancient cult belief the *Chaitya* had as much sanctity and divine character as any image, and a monument associated with a *Chaitya* was the object of worship according to all the ritulalistic details that were observed in the temples of Gods. This fact needs to be emphasised, for we are apt to think of the *Chaitya* as a mournful symbol of the Buddha's *Parinirvāṇa*. In fact, it was not so and the entire representation of the *Chaitya* symbol in art affords the clearest proof that the *Stūpa* was as much a symbol of religious joy, as the *Dharma-chakra* or the *Bodhi-vṛiksha*. Indeed the scenes of *Stūpa* worship on the lintels of Jaina *Stūpa* from Kaṅkālī Ṭīlā bespeak of the inherent gladdened spirit of the worshippers. The highest ecstatic will of the community taking form as the *Mahā-chaitya* is the key-note of the magnificent description given in the *Mahā-vaṁsa*. The raising of a *Chaitya* seems to be in the eyes of the builders, a phenomenon of cosmic significane in which all classes of *Devas*, royalty, priests, merchants and workmen participated with the highest enthusiasm in a spirit of joy and universal acclamation. This must have been the spirit behind the building of the *Stūpas* found at Vārāṇasī (Sārnāth) and of the *Chakra-stambha* which was an essential element of the same. Both stood as lofty banners proclaiming the triumphant message of the spirit of Man, or the divine element of nature, or of the manifestation of immortal life through the body. As the *Yūpa* was mounted by a

Deva-sadana or abode of the Gods so was the *Stūpa* crowned by a *Harmikā* where all the *Devas* live *en semble.*

FREE PILLARS AS PART OF TEMPLES :

The association of a pillar with a temple became a regular feature in later art as shown by many kinds of pillars forming part of the temple architecture, e.g., *Āyaka-khambha* (*Āryaka-skambha*) found at Amarāvatī, Jagayyapetta Nāgārjunīkoṇḍā as parts of the *Stūpa* itself ; *Brahma-stambha* or *Māna-stambha* in Jaina temples erected in front of colossal images ; *Liṅga-mudrā-stambha*, a pillar marked with the *Liṅga* form of the deity (Acharya, *Encyclopedia of Hindu Architecture,* p. 548) ; *Garuḍa-stambha* associated with the sign of Bhagavān Vāsudeva found at Basnagar (referred to above) ; *Lakshmī-khambha* or the pillar of the goddess Lakshmī, a monolithic column inscribed with the name (Acharya, *ibid,* p. 549) ; *Gaṇḍa-bheruṇḍa* pillar, a monolithic pillar with a figure of *Gaṇḍa-bheruṇḍa* on the top which was the same as a conventionalised *Garuḍa*, erected by Chāmuṇḍa Rāi in 1047 (Acharya, *ibid,* p. 552).

Fig. 57.

A few facts emerge about the pillar from the foregoing account as follows :—

1. The pillar was a Vedic conception as *Skambha,* where it has the cosmic background identical with *Brahman* itself and signifying the support of the universe.
2. The *Yūpa* or the sacrificial pillar was the visible type of the cosmic pillar which was invariably erected in every *Yajña.*
3. The idea of the *Yūpa* was transferred also to the region of Yama in the funeral ground (*Śmaśāna*), and it became a *Śmaśāna Yūpa* or *Chaitya Yūpa* or *Chaitya-stambha.*
4. The mantle of the *Yajña Yūpa* fell on the subsequent *Prāsāda-stambha* or *Deva-stambha.*
5. This took the form of a universal cult of *Stambha*-worship (*Stambha-maha*), glorifying the *Stambha* as a deity. This forms part of the broad-based popular pantheon in which the religious aspect of the pillar, whether it was topped by a *Chakra* (*Chakra-stambha*), or by a lion (*Siṁha-stambha*), or by a *Garuḍa* (*Garuḍa-stambha*), or by a palm tree (*Tāla-stambha*) etc., predominated. In reality it is the people who concretise their ideas and practices as a deity (*Devatā*). A very large number of such gods and goddesses, as enumerated in the list of *Mahā-Niddesa,* had taken form in popular imagination and come to stay in their cult. The *Stambha* was also one of them.

MEANING OF THE CHAKRA-STAMBHA OF AŚOKA:

Having gone into the outer form, history and evolution of the Pillar, it is now necessary to go into the inner meaning of the symbolism of the Aśokan Lion-capital (*Siṁha-śīrsha*) or more properly the *Chakra-stambha* which according to Aśoka himself was a *Dharma-stambha* and in Jaina tradition a *Chakra-dhvaja*. It is valid to use all these terms since from the evidence at our disposal the pillar in ancient times was known by many names as *Skambha* (*Khambha*), *Stambha* (derivative, *Thambha, Thamba, Thaba* etc.), *Yashṭi* (derivative, *Laṭṭhi, Lāṭ*), *Lakuṭa* (derivative, *Lauḍa, Laur*), *Dhvaja* (derivative, *Jhaya, Dhaya*), *Sthūṇā* (derivative, *Thūnī*) etc. In ancient architecture the builders conceived of as many as a thousand pillars. The Sabhā Parva refers to a big Assembly Hall with a hundred doors and a thousand pillars (*Sthūṇāsahasrair bṛihatīṁ śatadvārāṁ sabhāṁ mama*, 45. 46). The origin of the metaphysical conception of the pillar is found in the *Ṛigveda*. The Pillar is the *Axis Mundi*, the vertical support on which all the worlds find their stable placement. The *Ṛigvedic* word for the pillar is *Skambha* or *Skambhana*. The word *Stambha* is not used there. The central idea is that the heaven and earth (*Dyāvā-pṛithivī*), the Universal parents (*Janitrī*) of the cosmos with its time and space dimensions have their firm foundation resting on *Skambha*. He, who does this cosmic feat, is the Great God Indra, who himself is the most excellent of all pillars (*Skabhīyān*). The pillar on which He, as the Creator, has supported these worlds is the Sun (*Suryeṇa chaskambha, skambhanena skabhīyāna*, RV. X. 111.5). Sūrya is the highest symbol of the divine power, the Archetypal Pillar or support of the whole creation. In each system of world order its central fulcrum is Sūrya, the blazing source of Heat and Light which the Vedas declare to be the symbol of the Supernal Sun or the Divine *Brahman*. The *Chakra* is the best symbol of Sūrya manifested as Time. So the Great *Sūrya-chakra*, which is also *Bhava-chakra*, is identical with *Kāla-chakra*, the rotating Wheel of Time. Indeed the Vedic seers think of millions and billions of Suns in an axial alignment which make up the innumerable galaxies, constellations, Milky Ways and Universes. The Pillar and the *Chakra* were both visualised in the form of the Sun in heaven, *Sūrya*, which is the main support of the cosmos revealing the majesty of *Brahman*. Thus fortified in their basic approach in thinking of *Brahman* as *Skambha*, the Pillar (cf. *Skambha-sūkta* of the *Atharvaveda*) which is the source for world emanation and its immortal centre support, the Ṛishis conceived of a cosmic arrow (*Bāṇa*) piercing the earth, the sky and the heaven by the singleness of its power, that is, bringing the three

worlds into a single unified or integral pattern. This is the same as the shaft of the pillar. Its tall stature exemplifies the intrinsic power radiating in all directions from an invisible point which is its immortal centre and in which lie all the dynamic forces in a state of quiet rest (*Sthiti*).

The shaft of the Aśokan column is also an aesthetic creation by means of its slender tapering, tall stature and by the proper harmony of height and diameter, and above all by the lustrous sheen which reflects on earth or in matter the light of the Sun in heaven. The royal sculptors (*Rāja-śilpī, Rāja-takshā*) who undertook these lithic commissions on such a grand scale and executed them with an amazing mastery of technique, deserve the highest meed of praise. It has been opined by some writers that these originated not on the Indian soil but somewhere else in any part of the world. This is an argument which fails to take note of the stout elbows of those workmen whose spiritual contemporaries were the authors of the ideas which the former were called upon to execute in stone and put into visible form. Like the two wheels of a chariot the technical skill and ideas go together. The dynamism of the Indian mind transmitted to the Indian hands was sufficient in every manner to raise such monuments as the Lion-capital. There is not the slightest doubt raised from any quarter that the proto-types of the tall columns were being regularly carved in wood in the form of the sacrificial *Yūpas* from at least two thousand years B.C., since we begin to find mention of the *Yūpa* as the stately lord of the forest raising its head above its surroundings. The *Yūpa* was a fact of every day life in which the whole people took interest as the institution of *Yajña* demonstrates. If the *Yajña* is an indigenous product of the Indian soil, the carving of the *Yūpa* was much more so and it is rightly spoken of as the creation of Indra.

There are distinct references to those who were the carvers of the sacrificial pillars (*Yūpa-vraskāḥ*, RV. I. 162.6), doing the work of cutting and chiselling by means of tools referred to as *Svadhiti* (axe, RV.III.8.6), or *Vāśi* (adze), which were made both of copper (RV. VIII. 29.3), or in still earlier times of stone like the lithic celts (*Vāśībhis takshatāśmanmayībhiḥ*, RV. X. 101.10). Carpenters armed with their tools went out to the forest and having felled big trees for fashioning the *Yūpas* transported them to the villages. The two epithets *Yūpa-vraska* and *Yūpa-vāha* refer to these two operations. The *Yūpa* was not a mere shaft of the form of a log but definitely carved with several details one of which was the *Chashāla* or the upper ring (RV. III. 8.10), corresponding to the round drum of Aśokan pillars. The loftiness of such later capitals is a point

which struck even the ancient observers who compare them with the projecting horn on the heads of animals (RV. III. 8.10) and mention their tall stature (*Varshman*) rising high above the earth (*Ūrdhvastishṭha ; Uchchhrayasva vanaspate varshman pṛithivyā adhi*, RV. III. 8.3.). These lofty sacrificial pillars have been given the name of Banners of Sacrifices (*Adhvarasya Ketu*, RV.II.8.8), which were put up for general prosperity (*Uchchhrayasva mahate saubhagāya*, RV. III. 8.2). Indeed the *Yajña* in Vedic times was the expression of communal weal like the *Stūpa* which also signified universal good fortune as witnessed in the descent of the Great Man (*Mahā Purusha*). Here is an essential identity between the *Saubhāgya* or prosperity ideal behind all such banners whether raised in Brāhmanism or Buddhism. The practice of carving such huge pillars was an art which continued for more than 2000 years since we find in the *Ashṭadhyāyī* a reference to traders whose merchandise consisted of pillars (*Sthūṇa-bhāra*, Pāṇini 5.1.50) and who were designated as *Sthaūṇa-bhārika*. There were guilds of wood–carvers and car-wrights who plied their trade up and down the rivers in wooden pillars used for the construction of houses and axles of carts etc. Many kinds of pillars and stakes may have been included in this flourishing industry of ancient times. Twenty-five centuries of this craftsmanship preceded the monumental Aśokan pillars of stone. This indicates that there was no blank in the preceding millennia in the field of working on wooden pillars of almost the same size as seen in the Aśokan columns. All the technical details were a practised art of guilds of workmen. It is merely a question of transition from one material to another, otherwise a technical experience accummulated over centuries did precede the carving of Mauryan columns. Just as in the making of monumental gateways and railings (*Mahātoraṇa-vedikā*) round *Stūpas* and similar to the fashioning of the dimensional vaulted ribs and screens in the *Chaitya* Halls in timber, prior to the adoption of stone, so also in the case of the pillars the same evolutionary fact holds good. All art experts agree that the joints of the upright cross-bars and copings as well as several decorative motifs of railings at Bharhut and Sānchī are borrowed from wooden prototypes. The same phenomenon should not be forgotten in the case of the pillars. Moreover, even carving of stone is evidenced from the *Ṛigveda* which makes clear reference to a stone pulley or wheel (*Aśma-chakra*, RV. X.101.7), to stone-faced wells (*Aśmāsya avata*, RV. II. 24.4) and to the art of carving by means of stone celts (*Vāśībhis takshatāśmanmayībhiḥ*, RV. X. 101. 10). Obviously a complete absence of the art of working in stone in the pre-Mauryan age cannot be insisted upon, since both

literary references and archaelogical evidence bear witness to the once flourishing art of carving semi-precious stones, as shown by the crystal casket from the *Stūpa* at Piprahwā raised by the relatives of the Buddha soon after his *Pari-nirvāṇa*.

In the *Chakra-stambha* there is an idea and a form both of them placed in a perfect balance and we cannot tear the one from the other since they stand or fall together. If the one was indigenous the other was equally so. In every detail the idea was born on the Indian soil rooted in its several metaphysical traditions and was put into material form on the strength of technical experience gained through a long duration of time in the preceding ages especially during the Janapada period which was distinguished by the rise of many *Śilpas*.

PŪRṆA—GHAṬA :

The next element in the upward formal unfoldment (*Ūrdhva-chhanda*) of the Pillar is the *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with overflowing lotus-leaves. This has often been styled as the *bell* with inverted foliage by many a writer looking for foreign influences in the making of the *Chakra-stambha*. A detailed analysis of this motif gives a completely different view. There is not the slightest evidence any where in ancient Indian literature that the *bell* was ever employed in such a position. In fact it is the *Ghaṭa* or *Kalaśa* that we find forming part of a pillar basement or capital. This was the *Pūrṇa-kalaśa* of the *Ṛigveda* (RV. III. 32.15), *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* of the Pāli and Āgama literature, *Maṅgala-ghaṭa* or *Maṅgala-kalaśa* of popular tradition with which the homes were decorated and which was the first object to be consecrated in the religious and domestic rituals. The view that it is somehow a bell is totally untenable. We may clearly analyse five component parts in this motif, viz., (i) a narrow recessed base, (ii) a pinched belly, (iii) a bulging shoulder, (iv) a neck fastened with a cord, and (v) a rim. If it were a bell there would be no recessed base, no cord round the neck and no upper vertical rim. Then the long overflowing recurved petals and the smaller sepals have no relevance in the case of a bell. On the other hand, all these elements are perfectly justified in the case of a Full Vase or *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* overflowing with leaves.

It was also known as *Bhadra-kalaśa*, the Auspicious Jar in the *Ṛigveda* (RV. X. 32.9, *etāni bhadrā kalaśā kriyāma*). The *Atharvaveda* invokes the motif of the *Pūrṇa-kumbha* as a complete picture of an Indian household, full with all the blessings and felicitous fortunes (*Svasti saubhāgya*, AV. III.

12.2). The Pillar of the House is also invoked counselling an ascent along it by the path of truth (*Ṛite sthūṇām adhiroha*, AV. III. 12.6.). In the end the imagery of the Lady of the Home, the Eternal Woman, is given in clear terms as bearing the *Pūrṇa-kumbha*, the overflowing pitcher with streams of *Ghṛita* and *Amṛita* stored in it :

Pūrṇaṁ nāri pra bhara kumbhametaṁ
ghṛitasya dhārām amṛitena sambhṛitām, AV. III. 12.8.

The motif of the Woman with a Full Vase continued through the ages in popular belief, as shown by the mention of *Pūrṇa-kumbha Kanyā* as one of the auspicious symbols in the Lumbini procession of queen Māyā Devī (*Lalita Vistara*, Vaidya edn., p. 71).

The Eternal Woman is the symbol of Mother Earth, the principle of universal fertility, which is the support for the shaft topped by the *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* motif. The *Atharvaveda* takes the *Pūrṇa-kumbha* as the womb which conceals within it the mystery of the birth of all creatures (AV. XIX, 53.3, *Pūrṇaḥ kumbho adhikāla āhitaḥ/taṁ vai paśyāmo bahudhā nu santaḥ*). The overflowing foliage covering the Vase is the sign of the luxuriance of life being produced from this germinal source. The Ṛishi of the *Yajurveda* clearly mentions the Full Vase as the real progenitor of all beings by its mysterious power (*Kumbho janitā śachībhiḥ, Yajurveda* XIX. 87). There is a clear juxtaposition of the two categories of reality, the one is undifferentiated and unmanifest (*Ekam*) and the other differentiated and manifest (*Bahudhā*). This is seen in the single Pot and the multiple foliage issuing from it.

In ancient terminology it represented the *Nīlotpala*, the blue lotus which in medieval times was known as *Līlophar*. In Islamic architecture it was carved on the top of the dome which the workmen termed as *Maujpattā*, i.e., the sweeping long leaves with upturned ends. We may take the combined *Kalaśa-Āmalaka* motif on the Śikhara of the Hindu shrines as a continuation of the ancient *Maṅgala-ghaṭa* motif reproduced in a conventionalised form with flutings in place of the leaves. That it was intended by the Mauryan artists to be a *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with leaves is made certain by the form of the motif as interpreted during Śuṅga times on the railing pillars found at Sārnāth itself. **Figs. 31-32** They knew the original and their commentary, evolved in a century or so only, has to be accepted as of the highest authority. On two of the pillars No. D(*a*) 1 and D(*a*) 7, the side-scenes illustrate two *Chakra-stambhas* in which

the shafts are inserted in a *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* at the lower end and topped by
Figs. 31-32 another *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* overflowing with leaves and garlands. Here one sees the essential parts of the *Chakra-stambha*, namely, the top-most *Chakra*, *Pūrṇa-kumbha* and shaft with the difference that the four lions are replaced by a *Triratna* symbol to impart to it a religious meaning with more clarity (Sahni, *Chatalogue of the Sārnāth Museum*, pp. 20—9, D(*a*) 1. D(*a*) 7). Here a pleasing combination of many symbols like the *Chakra*, *Triratna*, *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* and *Śrīvatsa* is noticed. The same tradition of the *Pūrṇa-gaṭa* in the basement and on the top of the shaft is met with in the art of Amarāvatī (Furgusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship, pl.* LXXXIX).

The rope fastened round the neck of the pot makes it a *Mekhalī Ghaṭa*, pot with a girdle, referred to in literature also. In the face of this clear testimony of the ancient writers themselves one cannot accept the idea of the *bell* in this context which has no meaning both from the point of view of literary and art traditions. The *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* had five thousand years of history before and behind it when the Mauryan carvers took it in the fullness of joy. Apart from its continuity in the Vedic sector of time, in subsequent art it continued without break and indeed has come down to our own day. For example, we
Fig. 62 find it depicted in many forms and with great variations. At Bharhut we find the four elements, viz., the full vase, lotuses, elephants and the woman treated together, reminding of the woman and the *Pūrṇa-kumbha* of the *Atharvaveda*. Here the eternal Woman is depicted as Goddess Śrī-Lakshmī, and it is a ferti-
Fig. 63 lity motif no doubt. At Sānchī the full vase motif is associated with a rising lotus creeper of repeat motif characteristic of early representations there. The full vase itself is covered over with lotus petals and parted in the middle by a
Figs. 64-65 band. The lotus creeper becomes the rising meander at Amarāvatī with greater
Fig. 66 elaboration of leaves and flowers. On an ivory plaque from Kapiśā a charming example of the full vase is seen with fine lotus flowers, seed-pods and *Aśoka* flowers. A special feature is a scarf girdle with rich decorative pattern tied
Fig. 67 round the shoulders of the vase. This is very near to the specimen at Mathurā where the pot, flowers and girdle are of the highest aesthetic appeal. The motif also travelled to Greater India, e.g., its formal treatment surmounted by
Fig. 68 a rising lotus rhizome (*Padmalatā*) and addorsed animals on a stele at Anurādhapur (5th century A.D.) in Ceylon (Coomarswamy, *Yakshas*), and on the Stūpa of
Fig. 69 Borobudur (8th century) in Java (ibid, pl. 49, fig. 4, part II, pl. 29, fig. 3). A common feature seen on the examples from Sānchī, Mathurā, Kapiśā, Amarāvatī,

Anurādhapur, is the flowery girdle encircling the *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* which corresponds to the simple *Mekhalā* of the *Ghaṭa* of the Sārnāth and the twisted girdle of the Sānchī capitals.

An appropriate name for the pot and its lotus is found in Sanskrit tradition as *Padma-kośa* (*Sa padma-kośaḥ sahasodatishṭhat, Bhāgavata,* 3.8.14, i.e., the primeval lotus arose from the depths of the infinite ocean impelled by the irresistible power of energising time, *Kālena karma pratibodhanena*, ibid). It filled with its radiance the Universal Waters and it was Self-born (*Ātma-yoni*). By its nature it typified *Loka-padma*, i.e., manifestation of the Cosmos as Lotus. The reference to Waters here is to the ultimate cause or source of creation which is symbolised as the water of life within the *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* from which sprouts the lotus as the creative seed. The *Ṛigveda* itself gives *Kośa* as the synonym of a pot (*sekteva kośaṁ sisiche pibadhyai*, III. 32.15), and in that light the term *Padma-kośa* becomes significant for the combined motif of the vase and the lotus. The water in the pot represents Soma after which the Jar is called *Somadhāna Kalaśa* (3. 69.2) (*Endo viśa kalaśaṁ somadhānam*, RV. IX. 97.33). The foaming or the overflowing of the Jar is hinted at by the Ṛigvedic word *Āpipyāna*, i.e., streaming forth its contents (*adha śvetaṁ Kalaśaṁ gobhiraktamāpipyānaṁ maghavā śukramandhaḥ*, IV. 27.5). According to Vedic cosmogony the Waters termed as *Āpaḥ, Salilaṁ, Samudra, Arṇava,* signify the principle of Soma or Motherhood and they existed in the beginning of creation. It is one and the same thing to conceive of the Waters variously as an ocean, *Samudra, Sarovara* (*Brāhmasara*, the *Mānasa* lake of Brahmā), a Water-pot (*Kamaṇḍalu* of Brahmā), or any other unit containing water. Indeed, the Ṛigvedic Ṛishi is bold enough to think of the whole cosmos as a drop (*Drapsa*) or as a wave (*Ūrmi*) from the primeval ocean of Infinity which is the source. The Full Vase and the *Somadhāna Kalaśa* are variant symbols exemplifying the same idea. Water is *Soma* and the lotus emanating from its depth is *Agni*. In the *Ṛigveda* both Agni and Soma are stated to be the source of creation. These were the alternative views of philosophers[1].

Explaining the world-building forces the metaphysicians propounded two views ; some said : the Waters are of greater significance ; others said : Fire is of greater significance ; still others presenting a synthesis of the two pointed to the

[1]आपो भूयिष्ठा इत्येको अब्रवीदग्निर्भूयिष्ठ इत्यन्यो अब्रवीत् ।
वर्धयन्तीं बहुभ्यः प्रैको अब्रवीदृता वदन्तश्चमसाँ अपिंशत ॥ (RV. I. 161. 9)

lightning cloud which combines both the watery and the fiery principles. Thus expressing the truth of their minds the architects of the Universe fashioned the bowl (*Chamasa*)of creation.

This is somewhat similar to the controversialists of the nineteenth century, —the Neptunists who relate the aqueous origin of the world and the Plutonians standing for Fire as the agent of the creation. The truth is that both Fire and Water, Agni and Soma, have a common womb for the progenitive activity (*Agnīshomau purvam ekayonī pravartitau*, Śānti Parva, 329.1). Agni and Soma are, indeed, the Father and Mother principles, who form an inseparable pair in each physical container where life functions. This is the *Chamasa*, *Kalaśa* or *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* or *Kośa* which is depicted in art as the vase with the lotus, a well known symbol with its own charm and meaning. It is a complete equivalent of the Vedic doctrine *Agnīshomātmakaṁ Jagat*, saying that cosmos takes birth from both Agni and Soma, or that each being or animal (*Paśu*), which means *Purusha Paśu* (Man as an animal) is the composite form, of Fire and Water. (*Agnīshomīya Paśu*, *Śatapatha Br.*, 5.3.3.1.)

The *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with *Padma* or the *Padma-kośa* symbol on the top of the shaft is thus a complete exemplar of *Loka-padma*, i.e., the Cosmos as *Lotus* (*tal-lokapadmam*, *Bhāgavata*, 3.8.15). The cosmic life emanating out of Waters like the lotus plant is the outcome of vast convulsions of energy, a tectonic agitation of universal dimensions, deep stirrings which fill the interval of space between earth and heavens and, which were caused by a basic disturbance of the three *Guṇas*, specially of *Sattva* and *Tamas* by the interaction of *Rajas* or movement. Therefore, the water in the full vase is not still and without any activity but full with quickening impulses which burst forth into creativity as visible in the buds, flowers, seed-pods and leaves of the lotus plant. As the *Bhāgavatas* explain, the waters were permeated by high-spiral waves (*jalormi-chakra*) stirred by the strong wind which blows at the end of dissolution and by which the creative substance of the worlds is thrown up in the form of a lotus[1].

Even the primeval creator Svayambū Brahmā supported on this lotus did not understand the secret of this mystery.

It will thus appear that the *Padma-kośa* or *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* symbol is not haphazard on the top of the pillar, but is purposive in the light of the creative

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[1] तस्माद् युगान्तश्वसनावघूर्णजलोर्मिचक्रात्सलिलाद्विरूढम् ।
उपाश्रितः कंजमु लोकतत्त्वं नात्मानमद्धाविददादिदेवः ।। *Bhāga*. 3.8.17.

scheme outlined above. Buddha, the Great Being, rests on a lotus seat like Brahmā.

ROUND DRUM (AṆḌA-PHALAKA):

The next important element on the *Chakra-stambha* is the round abacus (*phalaka*) or drum (*aṇḍa*) carved with four smaller wheels (*Dharma-chakras*) and four noble animals (*Mahā Ājāneya Paśus*), namely, Elephant, Bull, Horse and Lion. It should be stated at the outset that to restrict the significance of these four animals to a Buddhist context is to miss their real significance in Indian culture through the ages. There is positive evidence that this conception like others runs through the whole history of Indian religion and has found expression in literature. It is not that the four creatures have to be looked for in any nook of a Buddhist text, but their thundering voice resounds in the literature and cult of the whole of Jambudvīpa; and the religious consciousness of the people living in India, Ceylon, Burma and Tibet has paid homage to the great idea of a quadruplicate scheme of manifested creation. It would be highly unfair to truncate the available evidence about the distribution of this symbol in space and time.

In the *Ṛigveda* Indra is called *Nṛimṇa*, the Foremost Man, corresponding to the Enlightened Buddha as a Mahā-Purusha. He is conceived of as a *Mahāhastī* (RV. VIII. 81.1) the Great Elephant, like the Buddha famed as *Gajatama* (Kalsi ins., cf. also gigantic elephant at Dhauli). The white Elephant seen by Māyā in her dream and the white Elephant of Indra both belong to a divine plane and are the symbols of *Ahaṅkāra* or Pure Consciousness. Like Buddha who was a *Śākya-Siṁha* and whose lion-roar reached the four ends of the earth, Indra also is several times compared to a Roaring Lion (*Nānadat Siṁha* same as *Kshubhyamāṇa Siṁha* of Sans. and *Khummāṇa Siṁha* of Prakrit and Apabhraṁśa literature). The dreaded lion (*Bhīma Mṛiga*) was the symbol of royalty for whom the use of tiger's skin was prescribed in the ritual of coronation.

It may be noted that the elephant and the lion are wild animals not fit for *Yajña*, whereas the bull and the horse are domestic animals which are called *Yajñīya*. The association of the latter with Indra is an established fact of Ṛigvedic imagery. Indra is called *Gopati* or *Gavāṁpati* (RV. I. 101.4)., and *Aśvapati* (VIII. 21.3). He is praised constantly by the people to obtain a bull and a horse. (*iti vā iti me mano gāmaśvaṁ sanuyāmiti*, RV. X. 119.1). He is the lord of the stables full of cows and steeds which he distributes liberally (*vrajaṁ gomanta-*

maśvinam, X. 62.7). Both the dreaded lion and the neighing horse are mentioned together in a verse, and so elsewhere *bhīma Siṁha* and *mṛiga Hastī* (wild elephant, IV. 16.14), like *go* and *aśva*, are mentioned as pairs corresponding to the *Saṁghāṭa* motif of early Indian art in Maurya, Śuṅga, Śaka and Kushāṇa periods. It is true that we do not find in the *Ṛigveda* all the four animals mentioned at a time, but the cumulative effect of the references to their combinations is enough to show that the association of Indra with all the four of them was part of a crystallised religious imagery in which the divine rank of each one of these was admitted.

It may also be mentioned that the fertile Indian imagination which developed the Vedic motifs into new transformations in the *Purāṇas*, as laid down in the injunction, *itihāsapurāṇābhyāṁ vedaṁ samupabṛiṁhayet ;* created out of these four animals four composite divine forms called *Purusha Paśus*, as follows :—

(1) *Mahāhastī*—as Gaṇapati, elephant-headed god.
(2) *Mahāvṛisha*—as Nandīśvara, bull-headed god.
(3) *Mahāsiṁha*—as Nṛisiṁha, lion-headed god.
(4) *Aśva*—as Hayaśirsha or Hayagrīva, horse-headed god.

These are the four noble animals (*Ājāneya Mahā Paśus*) combining both the divine and animal natures and representing the four basic types of temperaments into which the Life-principle or Prāṇa manifests iteself. They represent a fourfold revelation of the psychical contents in the Archetypal Consciousness of the Creator. It may be noted that two of these animals, Elephant and Lion, are wild (*āraṇya paśu*) and two of them, Bull and Horse, are domestic (*grāmya paśu*). In Vedic thought this also is significant, for the former symbolise the other world (*Deva-loka*) and the latter this world (*Manushya-loka*) and, therefore, he who accepts both of these as revealed in human life attains mastery over both the worlds of gods and men. This Prajāpati, the Creator, himself did and any one else can do (*Śatapatha Br.* 13.2.4.1).

The presence of the four animals framing the seated figure of a divinity, **Fig. 72.** often identified as Paśupati Śiva, on the famous seal from Mohenjo-daro takes back their depiction to greater antiquity and shows that it was known outside the orbit of the Ṛigvedic thought also. Three of the animals in the group are the same, namely, elephant, lion tiger and the bull, only the rhinoceros preceded the horse. And it seems to have been a deliberate choice, since the *Ekaśṛiṅga* was the favourite of the Harappans and the horse of the Aryans.

This combination of the Four Great Animals is further shown on an Indus Valley prism illustrated by Marshall where the animals are depicted as if marching in a file similar to their posture on the moonstones from Ceylon. The animals are Elephant, Bull, Tiger, Rhinoceros (Vol. III. pl. 118. fig. 10A-B). Against this background of the representation of the four great animals in a group in the religious symbolism of the Indus Valley people, we get some light why only these four animals are conspicuous on their seals and copper tablets (Marshall, p. 399). Fig. 70

On another seal from Mohenjo-daro we find the four animals conceived in a composite form and depicted as a Ram with trunk and tusk of an elephant, horns of a bull, hind quarters and legs of a tiger and a human face (Marshall, pp. 389-390 ; Seal Nos. 376-381). Fig. 71

There is yet another seal from Mohenjo-daro in which necks and heads of six animals have been joined to a single body; four of these are a unicorn, bull antelope and tiger ; the other two are probably rhinoceros and elephant. There can be no doubt that the Harappans had a clear idea of the symbolism lying behind the representation of the four animals as typifying a four-fold pattern or scheme of worldly reality.

It may also be noted that the four great animals, including unicorn in place of horse, are singly represented on many Indus Valleys Seals and Copper tablets in preference to any other animal. Figs. 75-79

The author of the *Aitareya Upanishad* wanting to illustrate the various basic types of the life principle (*Prāṇa*) mentions the Elephant, Bull, Horse and Man (*Purusha*) as exemplars of the same (A. Up. 3.3.).

The next notable reference to this group is found in the Vālmiki's *Rāmāyaṇa* where the four Aśokan animals are mentioned amongst the auspicious objects assembled for Rāma's coronation (*Ābhishechānika dravya*) in a list of more than twenty others (Ayodhyā, 14, 36-38). These names are *Mattavaravāraṇa* (Elephant), *Kakudmāna Pāṇḍura Vṛisha* (Bull), *Chaturdaṁshṭra Kesarī* (Lion) and *Mahābala Hariśreshṭha* (Horse) (Vulgate Bombay ed.). This is exactly the same order as found on the Sārnāth pillar. In the North-West Recension, published from Lahore, the order is elephant, horse and bull with the omission of lion (N.W. ed., *Ayodhyā*, 6, 10-13). In the critical edition from Baroda the lion is not mentioned and the epithet of the three other animals are simplified[1].

[1] *Pāṇḍuraścha vṛishaḥ sajjaḥ pāṇḍurāśvaścha susthitaḥ/prasrutaścha gajaḥ śrīmānaupavāhyaḥ pratīkshate*, Baroda, Critical Edition. 13. 10.

These variations indicate that the conventional list was elastic and that the account of the four animals in the Vulgate Edition is fuller than that of the others and agrees with the Lion-capital.

The *Chetiya Jātaka* refers to four towns in the four directions, three of them named after these animals :—

Name of the gate	Animal	City
(I) East	Elephant (*Hasti-ratna*)	*Hastipura*
(II) South	Horse (*Aśvaratna*)	*Aśvapura*
(III) West	Lion (*Kesarīratna*)	*Simhapura*
(IV) North	Chakra-Wheel (*Chakra-Pañjara*)	Uttara-Pañchāla

In the centre of the city having these four gateways was built a Stūpa, and this brings the conceptions of the four animals and the four gateways in harmony not only with the architectural conception of a Stūpa provided with four gateways and railing-quadrants, but also with the fourfold cosmic pattern in general.[1]

That the group of these animals formed an auspicious symbol which the Brāhmaṇas, Buddhists and Jainas accepted as part of a common heritage is shown conclusively by a reference in the *Jīvābhigamasūtra* also, in which the earth is divided into four *Dvīpas* and in front of each of them is an animal.[2]

[1] "एहि त्वं तात, पाचीनद्वारेन निक्खमित्वा उजुकं गच्छन्तो सब्बसेतं सत्तप्पतिट्ठितं हत्थिरतनं पस्सिस्ससि, ताय सञ्ञाय तत्थ नगरं मापेत्वा वस, तं नगरं हत्थिपुरं नाम भविस्सतीति" आह। दुतियं आमन्तेत्वा "त्वं तात दक्खिणाद्वारेन निक्खमित्वा उजुकं एव गच्छन्तो सब्बसेतं अस्सरतनं पस्सिस्ससि, ताय सञ्ञाय तत्थ नगरं मापेत्वा वस, तं नगरं अस्सपुरं नाम भविस्सतीति" आह। ततियं आमन्तेत्वा "त्वं तात पच्छिमद्वारेन निक्खमित्वा उजुकं गच्छन्तो केसरसीहं पस्सिस्ससि, ताय सञ्ञाय तत्थ नगरं मापेत्वा वस, तं नगरं सीहपुरं नाम भविस्सतीति" आह। चतुत्थं आमन्तेत्वा, त्वं तात उत्तरद्वारेन निक्खमित्वा उजुकं येव गच्छन्तो सब्बरतनमयं चक्कपञ्जरं पस्सिस्ससि, ताय सञ्ञाय तत्थ नगरं मापेत्वा वस, तं नगरं उत्तरपञ्चालं नाम भविस्सतीति" आह।

Chetiya Jātaka, Vol, III (422), p. 460.

[2]

(1)	East	आदर्शमुखद्वीप	अश्वमुख
(2)	South	मेण्ठमुखद्वीप	हस्तिमुख
(3)	West	अयोमुखद्वीप	सिंहमुख
(4)	North	गोमुखद्वीप	व्याघ्रमुख (?)

(which originally seems to have been गोमुख)

जीवाभिगमसूत्र, 3.1.113.

In this period (c. 600-300 B.C.) a large number of symbols occurs on the silver Punchmarked coins showing variations of the five symbol groups. The Sun-symbol and the *Shaḍara* symbol are common almost to all groups. If we look hear to the animal symbols which give a variety to the groups, we find that of the principal animals represented are these four, namely, elephant, bull, lion and horse[1].

Foucher had specially noted this point and illustrated them on the basis of Cunningham's *Coins of Ancient India* [pl. III.2, (elephant), I.26 (bull), III.3 (horse), III.2 (lion), *Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, pl. I, fig. 9-12]. Foucher had fallen into the error of taking them as Buddhist symbols. No one can defend that symbols on Punchmarked coins had any exclusive connection with Buddhism. Those symbols punched on coins which are hundreds in number came from the general stock of symbols in popular acceptance both for cult and other purposes. The Buddhists shared them in common with other sects as demonstrated by the *Niddesa*, an ancient commentary on *Sutta Nipāta*, where we find these animals prescribed for worship along with other eighteen tutelary deities. Their cult devotees were known as *Hatthivatika* (=*Hastivratika*), *Assavatika* (=*Aśvavratika*), *Govatika* (=*Govratika*) ; *Vrata* here stands for a religious cult of definitive character, and the same meaning of the word may be seen in the *Gītā* (*Yānti devavratā devān pitṛīn yānti pitṛīvratāḥ*, 9.25). The mention of these three animals along with Vāsudeva, Baladeva, Indra, Brahmā, Maṇibhadra, Pūrṇabhadra is a proof that they were held in as high a regard as the latter group of deities or for the matter of that as the *Yakshas*, *Nāgas*, *Gandharvas*, *Mahārājika* Gods, *Suparṇas* etc., which are also in the list. It is emphasised in the *Niddesa* passage that these cults had the objective of religious edification. Nāgasena in the *Milinda Pañha*, where a similar list including Kālī, Śiva, Vāsudeva, Maṇibhadra, Pūrṇabhadra, Chandra, Sūrya is repeated, stresses that those cults were esoteric in their nature, the voteries (*bhattiyo*=*bhakta*=*believers*) scrupulously guarded their secret from the uninitiated and the outsiders (*tesaṁ tesaṁ rahassaṁ tesu tesu ganesu yeva charati avasesānaṁ pihitaṁ*). Figs. 80-84

A Pali *Jātaka* (No. 455) refers to an elephant festival where a stone image of the elphant was worshipped. It is clear from the Pali references that the

[1] Allan, *Catalogue of Coins in Ancient India*, also P.L. Gupta, *Punchmarked Coins of Ancient India*, Vol. II, lion on plates 15, 16, 46, 50, 75 ; horse on plates 22, 28, 215, 218, 220 ; elephant and bull occur on numerous coins, as common symbols.

Buddhist texts were claiming to describe the cults as were practised then and the new reformists, of course much after Aśokan time, do not appear to have looked upon these cults with favour. However, on the drum of the Sārnāth Capital these *Mahā Ājāneya* animals have been depicted with the full force of approbation as due to their divine character. The *Bhagavadgītā* also enumerates the Horse with its prototype *Uchchaiḥśravā*, the Elephant with *Airāvata*, the Lion, and the Cow with *Kāmadhenu* (substituting the Cow for the Bull in the prevailing cult as the object of worship), and these names occur in a list of about forty *Devatās* including such folk deities as Vaiśravaṇa, Yakshas, Skanda, Samudra, Aśvattha, Nāga, Garuḍa, Makara, Gaṅgā, Himālaya, Parvata, which correspond to the folk deities (*Loka Devatās*) mentioned in a long list of religious festivals (*Maha*) given in the *Nāyādhamma-kahā*. It appears that in folk tradition the cults of these deities including that of the Four Animals, had come down from the remotest antiquity, for in the *Atharvaveda*, we have another such list comprising more than ninety *Devatās* including a general reference to the domestic and wild animals holding a divine rank (*divya pārthiva paśu* and *āraṇya mṛiga*, AV. X1.6.8).

If we look to the evidence recorded in the *Purāṇas* we find that the cult aspect of these four animals either as deity or as auspicious object was much more widespread than perhaps one would believe in the first instance. For example, it is stated in the *Padma Purāṇa* that the Earth Goddess appearing before king Pṛithu took the form of these four animals, first as Elephant (*Kuñjara-rūpa*), then as Lion (*Hari-rūpa*), then as she-Buffalo (*Mahishī*) and finally as Cow (*Go-rūpa*) (*Padma Purāṇa*, Bhūmi Khaṇḍa, Ch. 27. 95-101). The Buffalo occurs in place of the Horse.

The *Purāṇas* contain three kinds of lists which include divine, animal and other auspicious forms, e.g. (1) *Vibhūti* or Divine manifestations, (2) Auspicious objects (*Maṅgala Dravyas*), and (3) the best ones of a class (*Pravarānukīrtana*). In each one of them the names of these animals are included for which the tabulated list may be consulted (Appendix I).

In an intersting passage in *Divyāvadāna* there is a list of seventeen auspicious objects and animals carried in procession before the Buddha amongst which are the names of these four animals, viz., *Gaja, Vṛishabha, Aśva and Siṁha* (*Divyāvadāna*, Cowell, p. 45). As in the *Ṛigveda* Indra has been compared with an elephant, bull and lion, similarly Buddha in the *Divyāvadāna* is compared

several times to *Vṛishbaha, Siṁha and Gaja Divyāvadāna,* p. 171, and 267 ; (in place of the horse is its variable *Haṁsa*).[1]

In the *Iśāna-Śiva-Gurudeva-Paddhati*[2] the pedestal of a divine image is said to have an elephant, bull, lion and Bhūta (?) as depicted its four feet, reprenting symbolically Aiśvarya, Dharma, Jñāna and Vairāgya and symbolising the four colours, viz., white, red, black and yellow (*Iśāna-Śiva-Gurudeva P.* Vol. III, p. 103).

In the subsequent art tradition the grouping of these four animals was constantly repeated for more than fifteen hundred years. On a steatite plaque from Akra, now in the Indian Museum, these four animals are shown on a shallow dish. **Fig. 93**

Daya Ram Sahni mentions a small square terracotta plaque which he had seen in the Lahore Museum, 'showing a circular depression in the middle surrounded by the same four animals, arranged in the same order, the only point of difference between the two being that the intervening symbols on the terracotta plaque are a conch, a bowl, a *Dharma-chakra*, and a *Triratna* symbol'. (*Guide to the Buddhist Ruins of Sarnath,* p. 40).

On the moon-stones (*Chandra-Śilā*, also called *Ardha-chandra*) on the entrances of the sanctuaries at Anurādhapur, the four animals, are invariably represented in concentric bands (*J R A S*, 1946, pp. 123-145). As Vincent Smith rightly observed these animals symbolise the four directions or the four corners of the world as suggested by the discovery of the actual metallic figures of these four animals buried at the four quarters around a Stūpa. (Smith, *A History of Art in India and Ceylon*, 1930, p. 18, note 2). **Figs, 88-92**

Yuan Chwang has recorded a tradition current in his time about Mount *Meru* being the centre of the earth with four continents on four sides ruled by four Chakravartī kings each bearing a wheel of Gold, Silver, Copper, Iron respectively. He also refers to the *Anotatta* Lake with four rivers rising from the four mouths of the lake associated respectively with four animals as follows :

From the Eastern side—through the mouth of a silver ox—flows the Ganges (King-kia).

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[1] वृषभ इव गोगणपरिवृतो । गजराज इव कलभगणपरिवृतो ॥
सिंह इव दंष्ट्रिगणपरिवृतो । हंसराज इव हंसगणपरिवृतो ॥

[2] धर्मं रक्तं वृषरूपं तु सिंहं ज्ञानं श्यामं त्वथ भूतं तु पीतम् ।
वैराग्यं स्याद् गजरूपं सिताङ्गमैश्वर्यं च क्रमशः पादपीठाः ॥ etc.

From the South—through a golden elephant's mouth—flows Sindhu (Sin-to).

From the Western side—through the mouth of a horse of lapis-lazuli—flows Vakshu (Po-tsu).

From the North side—through the mouth of a crystal lion—flows Sītā (Si-to).[1]

The *Anavatapa* Lake (*Anotatta*), in which the Buddha took his bath and which symbolises the Buddhist cosmos, seems to have been an ancient belief since this motif is mentioned in the *Mahā-Ummagga Jātaka* amongst those which were painted on the walls of the Great Palace with many other subjects. In the Tibetan *Kailāsa Purāṇa* (*Kangri Karchhak*, काङरि काछंक्), a late work, there is mention of the Mānasarovara (*Tso Mapham*) Lake from which rise four rivers in four directions :

(1) West—Langchen Khambab (लाङ्छेन-खाम्बव्)—elephant-mouthed Sutlej.

(2) North—Senge Khambab (सेङ्गे-खाम्बव्)—lion-mouthed Indus.

(3) East—Tamchok Khambab (ताम्छोक्-खाम्बव्)—horse-mouthed Brahmaputra.

(4) South—Mapcha Khambab (माच्या-खाम्बव्)—peacock-mouthed Karnali.[2]

Thus the conception of the Four Great Rivers issuing from a central lake was typical of the four-fold distribution of creative forces from a single source. This was the *Anavatapta* Lake in which Buddha had immersed himself and which is in Hindu thought the Lake of *Brahmā* (*Brāhma-sara*).

Rowland has recorded the existence of these four animals as gargoyles attached to a tank at *Néak-Péan* in the ancient Khmer capital of Angkor ; here, they were associated with the worship of Lokeśvara, the merciful Bodhisatva who causes the water of the sacred lake to flow downward for the relief of souls in hell (Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, p. 258, Note 12).

In view of the above additional explanations we need not impose any arbitrary meaning on this motif. Vogel thought that they were mere subjects of decoration and symbolise nothing. Foucher was of the opinion that the aim

[1] SI-YU-KI, S. Beal, Vol. I, pp. 9-17. See our Appendix.

[2] See Swami Praṇavānanda, *Exploration in Tibet*, p. 179, also 20-1.

behind these motifs was to commemorate the four great events of Buddha's life, viz., the Bull standing for Birth under the taurus sign, the horse for renunciation, the elephant for conception and the lion for Śākya Siṁha. Bloch transferred the meaning to a Brāhamnical context where Bull stands for Śiva, Horse for Sūrya, Lion for Durgā and Elephant for Indra and these four animals in their subordinate position indicate the triumph of Buddhism. Such a parochial view is absolutely unwarranted and does grave injustice to the greatest of the Indian monuments which has to be understood in the light of the evidence extending over a period of five thousand years and covering a large part of the Asian continent.

The latest links in the chain are references from Hiṅdi literature and Rājasthānī painting. Keśavadāsa (1612-1675) in his *Rāma Chandrikā*, refers to the royal palace of Rāma ; to the four entrances which were guarded by these four animals, viz., Lion, Elephant (*Dantirāja*), Horse (*Vājirāja*) and Bull (*Nandī*)[1].

The source of Keśavadāsa seems to have been some *Sanskrit Rāmāyaṇa* otherthan that of Vālmīki for the reason that the latter has mentioned them in a different context as pointed out above. Still more surprising is a Rājasthānī painting (c. 18th century A.D.), now in the National Museum collection, at New Delhi, which illustrates in the centre the figure of a squatting male person within a solar orb and in the four cardinal directions the four animals, viz., elephant horse, lion and bull with four medallions in the intermediate directions each containing a man and a woman seated and engaged in conversation. This pictorial representation is almost a verbatim repetition of the eight figures on the round abacus of the Sārnāth Lion-capital, and the little modification of introducing the figures of *Dampatī* in the *Chakra* like medallion is justified according to the age in which the painting was produced. The painter's source of inspiration must have been the traditional lore for he was innocent of the archaeological evidence existing at Sārnāth. It seems that the combination of these four animals as a group had come down in the general consciousness of the people. **Fig. 94**

The combined symbolism of these four great animals continued in popular consciousness for about five thousand years, and its latest evidence is seen on a *Kanthā* cloth from Bengal now preserved in the Bharat Kala Bhavan Museum, **Fig. 95**

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[1]रची बिचारि चारि पौरिं पूरबादि लेखिए ॥
सुबेष एक सिंह पौरि एक दन्तिराज है।
सुएक बाजिराज एक नन्दि बेश साज है॥

Fig. 95 on which round a central lotus medallion representing the Sun, four animals are depicted in the four directions, viz., elephant, lion, bull, and horse and four figurines of caterpillars in the four intermediate points. This embroidered cover may be dated to the beginning of the 20th century. It is evident from the Rājasthānī painting and this *Kanthā* piece that the memory of the Mahā Ājāneya Paśus as religious symbols continued in the popular mind from west to east. What the artists in the Indus Valley depicted on their seal, and the sculpture of the Mauryan age on the Lion-capital and the folk artist of Rajasthan and Bengal belong to the common religious spirit and tradition of India in which, so far as this particular symbolism is concerned, distinction of creeds did not come into the picture. It was a common heritage of the people in all directions for about fifty centuries.

In the face of this overwhelming evidence we are obliged to infer that the group of four animals was a symbol widely accepted both in India and her neighbouring countries for nearly five thousand years as representing the four-fold manifestation on the level of the Cosmos and of Man. They are associated variously with four Continents, four Cities, four Gateways of a royal palace where the palace symbolises the dominion of a *Chakravartī* king, the sovereign whose *Chakra* rolls in four directions over the earth. In short this leads us to the ancient cult of the Four Quarters. The followers of which were known as *Diśā-vratika* (Pali *Disāvatiya* of the *Niddesa* Commentary on the *Sutta Piṭaka*, PTS, I, p. 89, Nalanda Devanagri ed. p. 74). It is stated that both Śramaṇas and Brāhamaṇas were followers of these cults in quest of religious piety and *Mukti* or freedom from the world. What was the significance of the Four Quarters ? The answer is that space originally is one but on the relative plane is differentiated into the four cardinal points of the four spaces or quarters. This is the same as a *svastika*, i.e., a focal centre extending its arms in the four directions so as to comprehend in their lap the whole cosmos both spatially and in depth. At each point of the extending arms of the *svastika* a *maṇḍala* is prescribed which is in the likeness of a *Chakra* revolving eviternally under the control of a changeless fixed point or centre called the navel of the *Chakra*, as we shall explain later the Wheel, in fact, has three navels (*trinābhi*) referring to the three psychical levels of manifestation.

The basic idea running through Buddhism, Jainism and Brāhmanism from the earliest times about the creation has been that it is in the pattern of a *svastika*, i.e., of four component parts or a fourfold manifestation. Buddha's

Dhamma is comprised of Four Truths (*ariya satya-chatushṭaya*). The whole conception of the *Chātummahārājika Devas* was taken from antiquity and rooted in a quadruple measuring out of the cosmos. This doctrine was allied to that of the Four Directions of space (*Chatasraḥ pradiśaḥ*). These were allocated to form types of *Devas* called *Chaturmahārāja*, Four Great Rulers, namely, Dhṛitarāshṭra, king of the *Gandharvas* in the east; Virūḍhaka of the *Kumbhāṇḍas* in the south; Virūpāksha of the *Nāgas* in the west and Kubera Vaiśravaṇa of the *Yakshas* in the north. The list is endlessly repeated in Buddhist literature and also in the Sanskrit tradition.[1] The orientation of the Great Stūpas like Bharhut and Sānchī followed this principle as seen in the four gateways and the four quadrants of the railing. At Bharhut the Four *Mahārāja* Gods were installed on the four *Toraṇas*, two of which bore a label of their names.

The conception of the four *Lokapāla* or *Dikpāla* divinities regarded sometimes as the guardian deities of different orders of being, but more commonly of the four cardinal points, e.g., (1) Indra of East, (2) Yama of South, (3) Varuṇa of West, and (4) Kubera of North. The same idea was intended to the four intermediate points of the world also, e.g., (5) Agni of South-east (*Āgneya koṇa*), (6) Sūrya of South-west (*Nairṛita*, substituting Nirṛiti for Sūrya), (7) Vāyu of North-east (*Vāyavya*) and, (8) Chandra of North-east (*Iśāna*). According to the *Darmasaṁgraha* the Buddhists also enumerated eight Lokapālas. Their placement was a common feature of all temples.

In fact, the Vedic cosmology is based on the fourfold division not only of space but of *Vāk* (Speech, *chatvāri vāk parimitā padāni*, RV. I. 164. 45), Worlds (*Lokāḥ*) (*Pṛithivī, Antariksha, Dyauḥ, Āpaḥ*), Gods (*Devāḥ*), (*Vasu, Rudra, Āditya, Viśvedeva*). The four *Vedas* themselves are related to the four quarters as Ṛigveda to East, Yajurveda to South, Atharvaveda to West and Sāmaveda to North.[2]

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[1] पुरिमं दिसं राजा धतरट्ठो गन्धब्बानं अधिपति महाराजा,
दक्खिणं दिसं राजा विरूढो कुम्भण्डानं अधिपति महाराजा,
पच्छिमं दिसं राजा विरूपक्खो नागानं अधिपति महाराजा,
उत्तरं दिसं राजा कुबेरो यक्खानं अधिपति महाराजा ।
Dīgha Nikāya, II, p. 257, III, p. 197-201, Mahāsamaya-Suttanta and Āṭānāṭiya-Suttanta. see also *Divyāvadāna*, pp. 126, 148, *Lalita Vistara*, Chap. 24.

[2] ऋचां प्राची महती दिगुच्यते यजुषामाहुर्दक्षिणामपाराम् ।
अथर्वणामङ्गिरसां प्रतीची साम्नामुदीची महती दिगुच्यते ॥
Taittirīya Brā. 3.12.9.1.

Not only this spatial conception of the four Vedas but they were also accepted as symbols of the four social classes or *Varṇas*.[1]

This formulation is said to have been enunciated by the ancient teachers to their pupils. In modern times the traditional Vedists take the four Vedas as having both anthropomorphic and thereomorphic forms. :

Ṛigveda having the face of a donkey (रासभानन) of white colour,
Yajurveda of a goat (अजानन) of yellow colour,
Sāmaveda of a horse (हयानन) of blue colour, and
Atharvaveda of a monkey (मर्कटानन) of bright colour.

These animals are different excepting the horse from those on the Lion-capital but the basic idea of depicting them in the form of animals is present in both. The four animals on the abacus are paired with four *Chakras*. The complete form of each is made up of a *Chakra* and an animal, the *Chakra* representing the divine *Prāṇic* power called *Purusha* and the animal the *Paśu*. So each pair of animal and *Chakra* is symbol of *Purushapaśu*, half human and half animal. The former stands for divine power and the latter for material body. The *Ṛigveda* conceives of the cosmos and human society as a *Yajña* in which four Man-Animal types have been tethered to the *Yūpa* or Pillar of sacrifice (*devā yadyajñaṁ tanvāna abadhnan purushaṁ paśum*, RV. X. 90. 15).

The animals on the abacus are typical of the following :—

(1) Elephant, its composite form is the elephant-headed Gaṇeśa (*Vedic, Brahmaṇaspati*)

(2) Bull, its composite form is the bull-headed Nandīśvara (*Vedic, Indra*, called a Bull with sharp horns, *Tigmasṛiṅga vṛishabha*)

(3) Lion, its composite form is the lion-headed Nṛisimha (*Vedic, Rudra*)

(4) Horse, its composite form is the horse-headed Hayaśīrsha (*Vedic, Dadhyan Atharvā*).

In the Purāṇic conception of the four Vedas as composite animals the donkey stands for the twin *Aśvins* who yoke him in their chariot ; the goat to Vedic Daksha, the presiding deity of sacrifice, Horse to Hayagrīva or Dadhyan Atharvā and the monkey to Hanumān or Vedic Vṛishākapi.

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[1] ऋग्भ्यो जातं वैश्यं वर्णमाहुः यजुर्वेदे क्षत्रियस्याहुर्योनिम् ।
सामवेदो ब्राह्मणानां प्रसूतिः पूर्वे पूर्वेभ्यो वच एतदूचुः ॥

Taittirīya Brā. 3.12.9.2.

FOUR CHAKRAS :

The whole cosmos is based on the principle of quadruplication (*chatushṭayaṁ vā idaṁ sarvam*). There is differentiation of types but it retains the basic unity. This is shown by the four different animals but each coupled with a *Chakra* of the same form. The *Mahāchakra* at the top becomes manifest for human life and in the world as four *Chakras*. The former represents the universal (*Samashṭi*) and the latter the individual (*Vyashṭi*), the first denoting the unity of the divine will and the second the types of the individual will[1]. The former is the source of the latter, transmitting its unlimited energy to a measured system by which each individual functions as a limited manifestation of the cosmic divine being. If we look at the four *Chakras* on the abacus and then turn our gaze to the Great Wheel (*Samashṭi-mahachchakra*) on the top a powerful impression is created on the mind how the two symbols are acting and reacting on each other with their vibrant meanings, the one rotating and revolving in a gyrating disposition and the other fixed and stable as the ultimate substratum of the phenomenal world. The great wheel is actually termed in the *Saṁhitā* as *Paramavyoma* (the Highest Empyrean), *Divya* (divine), *Aniyatta* (without *iyattā* or limitation), *Asaṅkocha* (free from the process of contraction and expansion), and *Ananta* (infinite) on account of which it has the nature of a Wheel with a thousand spokes (*sahasrāra Chakra*). In contrast to the Ultimate Cosmic wheel we are in the presence of a measured wheel (*Pramāṇamaya Chakra, Ahirbudhnya*, 10. 21, 25), rotating under restrictive ordinances (*iyattā sthitimaryādā, ibid*, 10. 33)[2] of the four basic individuated patterns. Such is the nature of the world which causes diversity of forms. Each of the four animals integrated to a *Chakra* offers an example of the four basic types. Many such Tetrads are present in society and in creation and they have often been enumerated in the several literary traditions of India—Buddhist, Jaina and Brāhamanical The pot with the lotus is a *Padmakośa* on which Brahmā (*ātmayoni svyambūabjaprishṭhādhishṭhita*, Bhāg. 3.8.18) finds support and creates the *Loka-tattva*, the Essence of the worlds in a fourfold form. The *Lokatattva* was created out of

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[1] तत्तत्प्रमाणमित्युक्तं स्थितिचक्रं महामुने । समष्टिव्यष्टिभावेन तद्द्विरूपं विभाव्यते ॥
ऐकरूप्येणसंकल्पो यः सर्वविषये स्थितः । महास्थितिमयं चक्रं तदेतंत् कीर्तितं मुने ॥
प्रातिस्विकी व्यवस्था या यस्य सत्त्वस्य यादृशी । तद् तद्वद्वचष्टिमये चक्रे प्रमाणे सा व्यवस्थिता ॥
Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā, 10.9-12

[2] तदाद्यं भगवद्रूपं चक्रं स्थितिमयं महत् । प्रमाणं येन तत्सर्वमियत्तां प्रतिपद्यते ॥
ibid, 10. 14-15)

the *Lokapadma* and their quadruplication is symbolised as the four faces of Brahmā. It is said in an esoteric style that the creator not seeing the world in a visible form turned his eyes in space in the four directions and thus became fourfaced[1]. Brahmā is archetypal of all the innumerable Tetrads (*Chatushṭaya*). In the *Purāṇas* the earth is explained as a four-petalled lotus (*chaturdala bhūpadma*), and in further elaboration of this idea they speak of a fourfold pattern based on four continents disposed in the four directions and the same associated with four great mountains, four forests, four rivers, four lakes and even four animals. Under the last item Hayagrīva or the Horse-headed creature is one and the other three are Tortoise, Boar and Fish. Their change was quite valid,since it cast the ancient forms into the new mould of Bhāgavata incarnations and since we have seen the forms of the Four Animals in the several lists were elastic, the basic idea of the four cardinal points typified as four creatures remaining the same. In fact the *Gītā* summarises all these fourfold concepts into one phrase as *purve chatvāraḥ*, the Four Primeval Ones (*Gītā*, 10.6), or the Four 'Archetypals'. Each one of these types is eternal, existing from the beginning of time to the end of creation. They are described as the four mind-born sons of the creator who sits on the lotus named as Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanatkumāra, i.e., the Four Eternal Ones (*sana*, eternal). It is this idea that Ṛishi Dīrghatamas describing the revolving cosmic wheel (*parivartamāna chakra*) bearing on its unheated axle the load of all the worlds, says that the navel of the wheel exists in eternity and never creaks or crumbles[2]. The great, unconquered wheel (*Ajit-Mahā-chakra*) on the top and the *Vyashṭi-chakras* on the drum (*aṇḍa*) are both threaded to a common Navel or umbilical cord as having come from the same womb or creative process and therefore they do not ever disrupt, and exist eviternally, the One as the principle of rest and the four others as typical of all-sided motion.

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[1] तल्लोकपद्मं स उ एव विष्णुः प्रावीविशत्सर्वगुणावभासम् ।
तस्मिन्स्वयं वेदमयो विधाता स्वयंभुवं यं स्म वदन्ति सोऽभूत् ॥
तस्यां स चाम्भोरुहकर्णिकायामवस्थितो लोकमपश्यमानः ।
परिक्रमन् व्योम्नि विवृत्तनेत्रश्चत्वारि लेभेऽनुदिशं मुखानि ॥
तस्माद्युगान्तश्वसनावघूर्णजलोर्मिचक्रात् सलिलाद्विरूढम् ।
उपाश्रितः कंजमु लोकतत्त्वं नात्मानमद्धाविददादिदेवः ॥
क एष योऽसावहमब्जपृष्ठ एतत्कुतो वाब्जमनन्यदप्सु ।
अस्ति ह्यधस्तादिह किञ्चनैतदधिष्ठितं यत्र सता नु भाव्यम् ॥ भागवत 3.8.15-18.

[2] पञ्चारे चक्रे परिवर्तमाने तस्मिन्नातस्थुर्भुवनानि विश्वा । तस्य नाक्षस्तप्यते भूरिभारः सनादेव न शीर्यते सनाभिः ॥
RV. I. 164. 13.

THE FOUR LIONS :

The four addorsed lions on the abacus carry forward the idea of the fourfold manifestation a step further. Their orientation facing the four cardinal points is an explicit statement of the same idea as depicted on the abacus, viz., fourfold differentiation yet governed by a formal as well as a basic unity of the great power, force or energy called *Cheshṭā*, *Sthāma*, *Bala*, which crowns the whole cosmos as the principle of Might or Fear that controls and governs every thing else.

The lions are seated back to back signifying that the power behind them is derived from one source which is their axis and which rises from a centre between their heads as the *Mahā-dharma-chakra*, or the Great Wheel of Law. Buddha was a born *Chakravartī*. Aśoka was a *Chakravartī* sovereign, *Māndhātā* was a *Chakravartī* emperor. The *Dīgha Nikāya* describes the ideal *Chakravartī* king once in the *Mahāsudassana Sutta* in which Mahāsudassana is the ideal *Chakravartī* ruler (II.4), who lived in the Palace of Piety (*Dharma-prāsāda*); a second time the *Chakravartī* ideal is elaborated in the *Chakkavatti Sīhanāda Sutta* (*Dīgh.* III.3) where king Dṛiḍhanemi was the perfect *Chakravartī* sovereign and on his retiring to the forest, his son strives to imbibe the *Chakravartī* ideal. His father instructs him in the *Chakravarti-Vrata*. On his avowedly following this ideal (*vrata*) he goes to the top of his palace and standing there, he obtains a vision of the *Divya Chakra-ratna* reappearing before him.

Long, long ago, brethren, there was a sovereign overlord named Strongtyre, a righteous king ruling in righteousness, lord of the four quarters of the earth, conqueror, the protector of his people, possessor of the seven precious things. His were these seven precious things, to wit, the Wheel, the Elephant, the Horse, the Gem, the Woman, the House-father, the Counsellor. More than a thousand sons also were his, heroes, vigorous of frame, crushers of the hosts of the enemy. He lived in supremacy over this earth to its ocean bounds, having conquered it, not by the scourge, not by the sword, but by righteousness.

Now, brethren, after many years, after many hundred years, after many thousand years, King Strongtyre commanded a certain man, saying: If thou shouldst see, sirrah, that the Celestial Wheel has sunk a little, has slipped down from its place, bring me word.

Even so, sire, replied the man.

Now after many years, after many hundred years, after many thousand years that man saw that the Celestial Wheel had sunk, had slipped down from its place. On seeing that he went to King Strongtyre and said: Know, sire, for a truth that thy Celestial Wheel has sunk, has slipped down from its place.

Then King Strongtyre, brethren, let the prince, his eldest son, be sent for, and spake thus:

Behold, dear boy, my Celestial Wheel has sunk a little, has slipped down from its place. Now it has been told me: If the Celestial Wheel of a Wheel-turning King shall sink down, shall slip down from its place, that king has not much longer to live. I have had my fill of human pleasures; it is time to seek after divine joys. Come, dear boy, take thou charge over this earth bounded by the ocean. But I, shaving hair and beard, and donning yellow robes, will go forth from home into the homeless state.

So, brethren, King Strongtyre, having in due form established his eldest son on the throne, shaved hair and beard, donned yellow robes and went forth from home into the homeless state. But on the seventh day after the royal hermit had gone forth, the Celestial Wheel disappeared.

Then a certain man went to the king, the anointed warrior, and told him, saying: Know, O king, for a truth, that the Celestial Wheel has disappeared!

Then that king, brethren, the anointed warrior, was grieved thereat and afflicted with sorrow. And he went to the royal hermit and told him, saying: Know, sire, for a truth, that the Celestial Wheel has disappeared.

And the anointed king so saying, the royal hermit made reply: Grieve thou not, dear son, that the Celestial Wheel has disappeared, nor be afflicted. For no paternal heritage of thine, dear son, is the Celestial Wheel. But verily, dear son, turn thou in the Ariyan turning of the Wheel-turners. (Act up to the noble ideal of duty set before themselves by the true sovereigns of the world). Then it may be well that if thou carry out the Ariyan duty of a Wheel-turning Monarch, and on the feast of the full moon thou wilt go with bathed head to keep the feast on the chief upper terrace, lo! the Celestial wheel will manifest itself with its thousand spokes, its tyre, navel, and all its parts complete.

But what, sire, is this Ariyan duty of a Wheel-turning Monarch?

This, dear son, that thou, leaning on the Norm (the Law of truth and righteousness) honouring, respecting and revering it, doing homage to it, hallowing

it, being thyself a Norm-banner, a Norm-signal, having the Norm as thy master, shouldst provide the right watch, ward, and protection for thine own folk, for the army, for the nobles, for vassals, for brahmins and house-holders, for town and country dwellers, for the religious world, and for beasts and birds. Throughout thy kingdom let no wrongdoing prevail. And whosoever in thy kingdom is poor, to him let wealth be given.

And when, dear son, in thy kingdom men of religious life, renouncing the carelessness arising from the intoxication of the senses, and devoted to forbearance and sympathy, each mastering self, each calming self, each perfecting self, shall come to thee from time to time, and question thee concerning what is good and what is bad, what is criminal and what is not, what is to be done and what left undone, what line of action will in the long run work for weal or for woe, thou shouldst hear what they have to say, and thou shouldst deter them from evil, and bid them take up what is good. This, dear son, is the Ariyan duty of a sovran of the world.

Even so, sire, answered the anointed king, and obeying, carried out the Ariyan duty of a sovran lord. To him, thus behaving, when on the feast of the full moon he had gone in due observance with bathed head to the chief upper terrace, the Celestial Wheel revealed itself, with its thousand spokes, its tyre, its navel, and all its parts complete. And seeing this it occurred to the king: It has been told me that a king to whom on such an occasion the Celestial Wheel reveals itself completely, becomes a Wheel-turning monarch. May I even also become a sovran of the world!

Then, brethern, the king arose from his seat, and uncovering his robe from one shoulder, took in his left hand a pitcher, and with his right hand sprinkled up over the Celestial Wheel, saying: Roll onward, O lord Wheel! Go forth and overcome, O lord Wheel!

Then, brethern, the Celestial Wheel rolled onwards towards the region of the East, and after it went the Wheel-turning king, and with him his army, horses and chariots and elephants and men. And in whatever place, brethern, the Wheel stopped, there the king, the victorious war-lord, took up his abode, and with him his fourfold army. Then all the rival kings in the region of the East came to the sovran king and said: Come, O mighty king! Welcome, O mighty king! All is thine, O mighty king! Teach us, O mighty king!

The king, the sovran war-lord, spake thus: Ye shall slay no living thing. Ye shall not take that which has not been given. Ye shall not act wrongly touching bodily desires. Ye shall speak no lie. Ye shall drink no maddening drink. Enjoy your possession as you have been wont to do.

Then, brethern, all they that were enemy kings in the region of the East became vassals to the king, the Wheel-turner.

Then, brethern, the Celestial Wheel, plunging down into the Eastern ocean, rose up out again, and rolled onwards to the region of the South......... (and there all happened as had happened in the East. And in like manner the Celestial Wheel, plunging into the Southern ocean, rose up out again and rolled onward to the region of the West.........and of the North; and there too all happened as had happened in the South and West).

Then, when the Celestial Wheel had gone forth conquering over the whole earth to its ocean boundary, it returned to the royal city, and stood, so that one might think it fixed, in front of the judgment hall at the entrance to the inner apartment of the king, the sovran of the world.

In this imagery the royal palace having four gateways in four directions is the perfect example of the cosmos. As, indeed, the palace of Mahāsudassana is described to be and which is named as the Palace of Piety (*Dharma-prāsāda*). This corresponds to the abacus with its fourfold symbolism of *Chakras* and animals. It is said that the *Dharma-chakra* of the sovereign starts from his Throne of Justice in the centre of the palace, and rolling to the ends of the earth and the ocean comes back to its source. The king who stood on the highest terrace of the *Dharma* palace is typified by the four lions. The *Divya-chakra-ratna*, which appears before the *Chakravartī* sovereign, of course, is seen as the crowning *Dharma-chakra* on the heads of the lions in the scheme of the *Chakra-stambha.*

Aśoka himself was following the ideal of a *Chakravartī* sovereign like Mahāsudassana between whose name and that of *Priyadarśī* there is an implied kinship. He took to this path by a new kind of victory viz., *Dhamma Vijaya* which is set forth as *Dhamma Lipi* engraved on the *Dhamma Thambhas.* In this there is nothing new since the detailed explanation of his *Dharma* follows almost *verbatim* the *Chakravarti-vrata* given above. The divine or heavenly wheel (*divya-Chakra*) was the foremost possession of the *Chakravartī* king and topped the list of seven Jewels which each *Chakravartī* sovereign invariably possesses. **Fig. 97**

The list includes an elephant, *Gajaratna* (*Uposatha Hastirāja*) and a horse, *Aśvaratna* (*Balāhaka Aśvarāja*). The author of the *Dīgha Nikāya* calls it a *divya-Chakra-ratna* of one thousand spokes (*sahasrāra*) strengthened by a felly and a navel (*sanemi-Sanābhi-sahasrāra-chakra*). Fig. 97

According to the ancient conception a *Chakravartī* king stood like a tower in his *Chakra* or dominion with the Umbrella of Royal power over him and the Seven Treasures typifying the seven great possessions which belonged to each ruler or individual master of a house-hold (*dame dame sapta ratnaḥ dadhānaḥ* RV. V. 1.5). Indeed the *Chakravartī* is depicted as raining a shower of wealth (*Suvarṇa-vṛishṭi*) which circulated throughout his kingdom where his *Dharma-chakra* was constantly ruling, drawing its irresistible power from the Throne of Justice installed in the palace. Aśoka was striving to function as an ideal *Chakravartī*. He was possessed with the idea of *Dhamma* or supernatural justice and he gave to it a new interpretation. For him *Dhamma* was a dynamic principle incarnating as the kingdom of Piety (*Dharma-chakra*). He speakes of *Dhamma-kāmatā*, Love of morality, *Tīvra Dhamma-vāda*, a zealous indoctrination of morality and *Dhammānusasti*, instruction of the people in *Dharma*. He initiated a new programme of winning the people of his kingdom by morality (*Dhamma-Vijaya*). For this purpose he inscribed golden words of morality (*Dhamma-lipi*) engraved on lofty columns named the Pillars of Morality (*Dhamma-Thambha*). The king *Devānāṁ priyadarśī* intends to promote the practice of morality until the end of the world (*Dhamma-charaṇaṁ ava savat-kapa*). Aśoka, the author of the idea of *Dharma-chakra* Pillar, has thus interpreted his conceptions of *Dhamma* :

"This is the most excellent duty, namely, instruction in morality (*Esa hi seshṭe kamme ya dhammānusāsanam*, Rock edict IV)."

He started a perpetual session for the Gift of Morality (*Dhamma-Dāna*) desiring the increase of morality amongst his people (*Dhamma-vṛiddhi*). He went out to mingle with his subjects on tours of morality called *Dhamma-yātā* and conducted open symposia on topics of morality (*Dhamma-palipuchchhā*), creating the welfare of the people through morality (*Dhamma-maṅgala*). He knew that the building of the State according to the new ideals of *Dhamma* was indeed difficult and therefore he advocated a new kind of intense devotion and zeal (*Agra-prakrama*) for obedience to the principles and practice of morality (*Dhamma-susūsā*). According to him there is no such gift as the gift of morality

(*Dhamma-dāna*), or acquiantance through morality (*Dhamma-saṁstava*) or, broadcasting of morality (*Dhamma-saṁvibhāga*), or kinship through morality (*Dhamma-saṁbandha*). The ringing words of the Emperor laying down his interpretation of *Dhamma* are clear and specific, practical and purposeful. It is this interpretation that holds good in the case of the *Dharma* symbolised by the *Dharma-chakra* of the Buddha or the *Chakra-ratna* of a *Chakravartī* king.

The *Lalita Vistara* clearly explains the *Dharma-chakra-pravartana* of the Buddha as a *Dharma-Yajña* or *Dharma-varsha*, showers of *Dharma*. The wheel of *Dharma* is called an *Amṛita-chakra* (L.V. 26.17) and *Anuttara-chakra* (*Lalita Vistara*, 26.12), excellent wheel than which there is nothing higher or more wonderful (*Adbhutam*, L.V. 26.12, 26.17). "The great preacher of divine majesty has set into motion the *Dharma-chakra* for the welfare of many, for the happiness of many, as compassion to the whole world, for the good and happiness of all gods and men. O Teacher ! create this *Dharma-Yajña* ; shower this rain of *Dharma* ; raise this lofty banner of *Dharma* ; blow this loud conch of *Dharma* ; strike the big drum of *Dharma*"[1].

Mahā-dharma-dhvaja is just the appropriate title by which the idealist thinkers of the Gupta age would refer to the Wheel-topped Pillar of Aśoka, the ancient *Chakra-stambha*.

In the *Chakra* pillar there is a harmony of ideals, the *Kshatra* ideal of a *Chakravartī* king and the *Brahma* ideal of a *Mahā Yogī*. The Buddha was born in the family of a *Chakravartī* but was destined to become a *Mahā Yogī*. This is exemplified in the *Dharma-chakra* pillar, the composite ideal of the Buddha is not different from that of ancient Royal Sages (*Rājarshis*) who combined in them both temporal power (*Kshatra*) and spiritual authority (*Brahma*), the latter typified by the *Purohita* of the ruler. In the person of Janaka and other *Rājarshi* kings, this higher kind of discipline or philosophy of life as stated in the *Gītā*, was considered to be a special kind of Yoga, traditionally handed down as a *Rāja-vidyā* (the Foremost Knowledge) preserved as the best of secret (*Rāja-guhya*). In the words of Coomaraswamy this represents a marriage of the *Sacre-*

[1] प्रवर्तयतु भगवान् धर्मचक्रम्, प्रवर्तयतु सुगतो धर्मचक्रं बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय लोकानुकम्पायै महतो जनकायस्यार्थाय हिताय सुखाय देवानां च मनुष्याणां च। यजस्व भगवान् धर्मयज्ञम्, प्रवर्ष महाधर्मवर्षम्, उच्छ्रेपय महाधर्मध्वजम्, प्रपूरय धर्मशङ्खम्, प्रताडय धर्मदुन्दुभिम्।

Lalita Vistara, 26, Vaidya ed., p. 301.

dotium (*Brahma*) and the *Regium* (*Kshatra*) (Coomaraswamy, *Spiritual Authority and Temporal Power*). In the words of Kauṭilya 'State and Morality go together.'

The whole of this science of polity has to do with a victory over the powers of perception and action (*Kṛitsnaṁ hi śāstram idam indriya-jayaḥ*, *Arthaśāstra*, 1.6). Aśoka speaks of this kind of victory as *Dhamma-vijaya*. After recounting his political victory and expressing his deep regret for it because of the suffering inflicted on the conquered, he says, "And this is the foremost victory, the victory of *Dharma*." He even enjoins upon his successors "to regard as 'victory' the Victory of *Dharma* which avails for this world and the other" (13th Rock Edict).

Aśoka should be reckoned as one in the line of the Great *Chakravartī* Kings both going before and coming after. There is a traditional list in the *Maitrāyaṇī Upanishad* giving the names of *Chakravartī* rulers of antiquity who had realised the emptiness of material enjoyment or the pleasure of senses and concentrated their thought on the higher values of life (*nissāre asmin śarīre kiṁ kāmopabhogaiḥ*): e.g. Sudyumna, Bhūridyumna, Indradyumna, Kuvalayāśva, Yauvanāśva, Vadhryaśva, Aśvapati, Śaśavindu, Hariśchandra, Ambarīsha, Nahusha, Śaryāti, Yayāti, Anaraṇya, etc. They had realised the futility of passions like anger, love, greed, attachment and fear. This is substantially the same kind of cogitative approach towards life and the world as that of the Buddha and Aśoka. The message of Aśoka as delivered through his *Dharma-chakra-stambha* is the same as that of *Chakravartī* kings, who ruled over Bhārata-Varsha, the country which was dear to Indra, King of the Gods, Vaivasvata Manu, Pṛithu, Ikshvāku, Māndhātā, Muchukunda, Śibi, Ṛishabha, Aila, Nṛiga, Yayāti, Ambarīsha and others (Bhīshma Parva, 10.5-9).[1]

[1] अत्र ते कीर्तयिष्यामि वर्षं भारत भारतम् ।
प्रियमिन्द्रस्य देवस्य मनोर्वैवस्वतस्य च ॥५॥
पृथोस्तु राजन्वैन्यस्य तथेक्ष्वाकोर्महात्मनः ।
ययातेरम्बरीषस्य मान्धातुर्नहुषस्य च ॥६॥
तथैव मुचुकुंदस्य शिबेरौशीनरस्य च ।
ऋषभस्य तथैलस्य नृगस्य नृपतेस्तथा ॥७॥
कुशिकस्य च दुर्धर्ष गाधेश्चैव महात्मनः ।
सोमकस्य च दुर्धर्ष दिलीपस्य तथैव च ॥८॥
अन्येषां च महाराज क्षत्रियाणां बलीयसाम् ।
सर्वेषामेव राजेन्द्र प्रियं भारत भारतम् ॥९॥

MAN IS THE PILLAR :

Why did these great kings and for the matter of that any one high or low born on the Indian soil gives his affection to the motherland ? It is not for physical comfort or joys, but it is a spiritual tie with those ideals of *Dharma* for which this country stands. The ideals of truth, supreme love, *Tapas*, devoted life, *Yajña* and *Brahma* uphold the earth in a real sense and this is in essence the *Dharma* inculcated by the Buddha and Aśoka, as by other sages and princes of royal lineage. This line has not stopped and the old legacy descends from generation to generation on the rulers, thinkers and the people bound together in a common endeavour and ideal to attain the supreme values of the spirit and the mind. The idea of eight auspicious blessings to become a *Samyak Sambuddha* is coeval with becoming a *Chakravartī* king, the latter being counted as foremost in piety (राजा भवति चक्रवर्ती इयं प्रथमा महापुण्यता, *Lalita Vistara*, 26). Indeed it may be said that the entire conception of the symbolism of the Aśokan capital holds good in the case of each individual. Truly speaking "MAN IS THE PILLAR", as we read in the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Up.* : 'The Life principle is the Pillar (*Prāṇaḥ sthūṇaḥ*, BU. 2.2.1).'

An esoteric explanation of this symbolism is quite valid according to the great religious traditions of this country. For example, the author of the *Iśāna-Śiva-Guru-Deva-Paddhati* (III.103) explains the Bull as *Dharma*, the Lion as *Jñāna*, the Elephant as *Aiśvarya*, and the Tiger (instead of the horse) as the material body, and that all these four were to be depicted on the pedestals of divine images.

The Stūpa was also illustrative of the fourfold world, topped by a crowning *harmikā* which was the seat of Gods; and similar is the Lion-capital on the summit of which the *Dharma-chakra* was considered as the divine symbol (*Divya-Ratna*). Here divine and human aspects of life shake hands for reciprocal inspiration or common energising. The pillar was not only the symbol of Man but also of Cosmos; and the divine principle that abides in it is the immanent reality and that is beyond it is the ultimate transcendence.

The most elaborate statement of the philosophy of the pillar is found in the *Skambha Sūktas* of the *Atharvaveda* (X.7.1-44 and X.8.1-43). The Hymns are a glorification of the Supreme Divine Principle which is the ultimate cause and source of creation, embodied under the name of *Skambha*, the Pillar, Support or Fulcrum of all existence. According to this *Sūkta* Prajāpati has

supported all the worlds on the Pillar. He has measured out the various parts of the Pillar (*Skambhasya mimāno aṅgam*, 2) and the One became a thousand-fold (*Ekam akṛiṇot sahasradhā*, 9), which corresponds to the thousand spokes (*Sahasrāra*) of Buddha's *Dharma-chakra* and of Vishṇu's *Sudarśana Chakra*. There are three parts of the pillar, viz., the upper (*parama*), middle (*madhyama*) and lower (*avama*) which correspond to heaven, intermediate region and earth (1.12). The three *Lokas* (22, 29, 32), three *Vedas* (14) and three *Devas* (22) abide in the Pillar. The Pillar is the source of the four regions of space (*Chatasraḥ pradiśaḥ*, 16). There are two divisions of the pillar, the first is called *Asat*, which is the ultimate (*Para*, 25) and ancient (*Purāṇa* 26), the unborn as it was *in principio* (*Ajaḥ prathamaṁ sambabhūva*, 31) which enjoys *Svarājya* as its unique birth-right and which is also known as the highest Brahman (*Jyeshṭha-Brahma*, 32). The second part of the *Skambha* is the one where the thirty-three Great Gods (*Bṛihanto nāma Devāḥ*, 25) comprising the hosts of *Vasus*, *Rudras* and *Ādityas* abide. These two parts are respectively known as *Asat-śākhā* and *Sat-śākhā*, the one being higher (*Parama*) and the other lower (*Avara*, 21). The *Mahā-Dharma-chakra* corresponds to the upper part and the lower portion comprising the three elements of the four lions, round abacus and *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* correspond to the *Sat* or material manifestation. According to the Vedic doctrine as stated here (*Mantra* 25) *Sat* or the cosmic majesties of the Great Gods (*Bṛihant Devas*) are born from a Prāṇic source called *Asat*. In Vedic cosmogony *Prāṇa* or Life-principle is *Asat* (*Prāṇā vā ṛishayaḥ asat*, ŚB. 6.1.1.1) and *Bhūta* or Matter is *Sat*. These two portions, viz., *Mahā-chakra* above and the three component parts below have a variant terminology also. The first is known as *Hiraṇyagarbha* (the Golden Germ) and the second as *Hiraṇya* (Gold) ; that which is the germ is unmanifest and therefore the ultimate (*Parama*) about which nothing can be predicated (*Anatyudya*), that is beyond the category of words, or belonging to the region of silence and eternity. Such is the *Mahā-chakra* which with its thousand spokes corresponds to the thousand syllabled speech of the Ultimate Reality (*Sahasrāksharā parame vyoman*). *Hiraṇya* or gold is the symbol of manifestation. It was *Brahman* as the pillar which on the one hand stood as the primeval golden germ in the world Egg, and on the other has filled the space between earth and heaven with gold or manifest Life and Light. All the worlds existed in a latent form in the womb of the Pillar (*Skambha idaṁ viśvaṁ bhuvanam ā viveśa*, 35), and from there they have become manifest (*Lokān sarvān samānaśe*, 36). The Pillar is the Being

of Mystery, a mighty *Yaksha* standing at the centre of the world on the surface of the Waters or the Infinite Ocean represented here as the Water in the pot. The pillar stands like the trunk of the cosmic tree (*Vṛikshasya skandhaḥ*, 38). It is the Golden Reed springing from the depth of the flood (*vetasaṁ hiraṇyayaṁ tishṭhantaṁ salile*, 41). Who is this Pillar, Tree or Reed ? He is the mysterious Lord of Life (*Sa vai guhyaḥ prajāpatiḥ*, 41).

Here we find some explicit indications by which we may understand the symbolism of Prajāpati as the Pillar, the immortal source of mortal creation, whose primeval ordinances work out after a basal duality expressed by many names, e.g., *Asat* and *Sat*, *Hiraṇyagarbha* and *Hiraṇya*, *Samashṭi-mahā-chakra* and *Vyashṭi-chakra*. The *Chakra* at the top and the three component parts below conform to the above two-fold symbolism. The lower portion exemplified many of the Triads, e.g., *Trideva*, *Triloka*, *Triveda* and *Triguṇa*. The *Ghaṭa-pallava* motif corresponds to Vishṇu or *Sattva guṇa* ; the round abacus with four animals and smaller *chakras* to the quality of *Rajas* or Brahmā ; and the four lions to the principle of *Tamas* or Rudra. This is the triple rhythmic ascending disposition (*Ūrdhva-chhandas*) of the trinitarian cosmos with which we are familiar in Buddhism, Jainism, and Brāhmanism. The one becomes three in visible creation and this makes up the four parts of the Capital. We may see that this differentiation of the One as Four works both vertically and laterally.

The next hymn in the *Atharvaveda* (X.8.1-44) carries forward the same idea of the Great Divinity (*Jyeshṭha Brahman*), but this time as Chakra. Thus the two hymns (*Sūktas*) together describe the Pillar (*Skambha*) and Wheel (*Chakra*). They furnish a complete formula of the *Chakra*-topped Pillar as concretised in the Sārnāth Capital and Column. Here the four-fold division of the Pillar or of the Wheel is enunciated.

That which was footless *ab intra* became four-footed *ab extra*[1]. This was the ancient doctrine of *Chatushpād Brahman*, originally mentioned in the *Purusha Sūkta* (RV. X.90.4) ; same as *Chatushpād Ātmā* of the *Upanishads* or the Four-braided Maiden (*Chatushkapardā yuvatiḥ*, RV. X. 1I4.3) symbolising Infinite Nature.

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[1] अपादग्रे समभवत्सो अग्रे स्वराभरत् ।
चतुष्पाद्भूत्वा भोग्यः सर्वमादत्त भोजनम् ॥ AV. X. 8.21

The two-fold conception of the cosmos as the outcome of the juxtaposition of the Infinite and the Finite is clearly mentioned here (*Anantaṁ vitataṁ purutrānantamantavachchā samante*, AV. X.8.12). These are like the two halves of a single ultimate reality; by one half the worlds are produced and the other half which remains beyond is unknown (*Ardhena viśvaṁ bhuvanaṁ jajāna yadasyārdhaṁ kva tad babhūva*, AV. X.8.7). Within the womb Prajāpati is moving. He though unseen is born in many forms. With one half he engendered all creation; what banner points to the other half (*Yadasyārdhaṁ katamaḥ sa ketuḥ*, AV. X.8.13)? This question about the identity of its unmanifest half portion also carries its answer with it, viz., Prajāpati himself is comprised of both the halves, both manifest and unmanifest (*Nirukta, Anirukta*), Limited and Limitless (*Parimita, Aparimita*), Death and Immortality (*Mṛityu, Amṛita*), Finite and Infinite (*Antavat, Ananta*, ŚB. 6.5.3.7).[1]

Several points about the Mighty Divine Creator manifested both as the Wheel and the Pillar may be noted here. He is One in his transcendental (*Ekapād*) aspect and fourfold in immanent form (*Chatushpād*). The Absolute becomes differentiated, but still retains its singular or unitarian nature (*Viśvarūpaṁ tat sambhūya bhavatyekameva*, AV. X.8.11). Its two aspects, viz. the infinite and finite are contiguous, i.e. maintain a dynamic contact for which some mysterious power called *Nākapāla* (Guardian of the heavenly ridge which joins the two) is responsible (*ibid.* X.8.12). In the pillar capital the juncture between the great wheel above and the lion capital below represents the *Nāka* or heavenly summit which regulates the relationship of the unmanifest womb of the universe as the great wheel and the manifested cosmos as the trinity of the worlds (*triloka*) and the Devas (*trideva*) etc. It is also stated that the transcendent is infinite (*asaṁkhyeya*), but is changing itself into finite numbers as hundred, thousand, ten thousand, a million etc. The corpus of the Divine Absolute symbolised as *Sahasrāra Chakra* is being parcelled out as *Pañchāra, Shaḍara, Dvādaśāra, Shodaśāra, Śatāra chakras* on the plane of material manifestation. But the original wheel remains unimpared which is its beauty (*ibid*, X.8.24). Such is the immortal poetry in the constitution of the wheel and the pillar, viz., the divine entity that neither ages nor dies (*devasya paśya kāvyaṁ na mamāra na jīryati*, AV. X.8.32). The gods and men, viz., celestial and earthly powers both are fixed in the navel of the wheel like its spokes, which assures the continuity of the rotation of the wheel and conjoint

[1] उभयं वैतत्प्रजापतिर्निरुक्तश्चानिरुक्तश्च परिमितश्चापरिमितश्च, ŚB. 6. 5. 3. 7.

functioning of *prāṇic* energy and matter.[1] Here specific mention is made of the watery flood and the flower that issues forth from its depth (*apāṁ pushpam, ibid,* X.8.34), which is just the *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* or *Ghaṭa-pallava* symbol at the base of the capital. The flower is Agni and the pot is Soma. According to Vedic symbolism the water's flower is the lotus or Agni or the life-principle which symbolises the creative force called *Brahmā* whose seat is the lotus.[2] The motherly potency of the water in the pot becomes visible as the lotus, and it further extends as the fourfold cosmos. All this process is called *Svadhā* or the intrinsic power of Mother Nature of which the source is in the topmost wheel which although detached controls the whole cosmic rhythm. Whatever movement or revolution is seen in the smaller wheels below has its source in the great wheel above. The lotus (*Puṇḍarīka*) is said to be pregnant with the three *Guṇas*.[3]

CHAKRA :

The conception of the *Chakra* was perfected in the Vedas as the symbol of creation (called *Brahma Chakra*), and of time (*Kāla Chakra*). It was later on known as *Saṁsāra Chakra* which the Buddhists styled as *Bhava Chakra* and *Dharma Chakra* called *Tryadhvā*. For the Vedic thinkers *Chakra* is the symbol of movement (*Gati*) in accordance with a rhythm (*Chhandas*). The basic quality of wheel is its dual characteristic as seen in the ascent and descent, as the rhythmic unfoldment of time in the form of the rotation of night and day (*ahorātra*), the bright and dark halves of the month (*śuklapaksha* and *kṛishṇapaksha*), two semesters of the *Saṁvatsara* (*uttarāyaṇa* and *dakshiṇāyana*), and lastly the ever-present process of contraction and expansion (*samañchana-prasāraṇa*, ŚB. 8. 1. 4. 10), of a forward and backward movement (*eti cha preti cha*, AB. 15. 16 and VS. 27. 45 ; *puraḥ pravartate paśchā nivartate*, AV. X.8.7), etc. The *Ṛigveda* conceives of it as the black and the white *Rajas* forces (*kṛishṇa arjuna rajasī vivartete*, VI.9.1). Both space and time are the outcome of movement and both are symbolised as *chakra*. In temporal aspect past, present and future form a *chakra*, and in the spatial the earth, sky and heaven. Both of these are symbolised in nature as Sun and therefore Mārtaṇḍa or Sūrya is conceived of as the Great Wheel (*Mahā-Chakra* or *Bṛihant Chakra*).

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1 यत्र देवाश्च मनुष्याश्चारा नाभाविव श्रिताः, AV. X.8.34.

2 ब्रह्म ह वै ब्रह्माणं पुष्करे ससृजे *Gopatha Br.* 1.1.16.

3 त्रिभिर्गुणेभिरावृतम् AV. 10.8.43.

A frequent description of *Kāla-chakra* or Time-wheel gives an elastic account of the number of spokes as three (*tryara*), five (*pañchāra*, RV. I. 164. 13), six (*shaḍara*, I. 164.12), twelve (*dvādaśāra*[1]), fifty (*śatardhāra*, *Svetāśvatara Up.* I. 4), and even a thousand (*ekachakraṁ vartata ekanemi sahasrāksharaṁ prapuro-nipashchā*, AV. X. 10. 87). The *Chakra* in the *Ṛigveda* is described as *sanemi*[2] and *sanābhi* or *trinābhi*[3]. *Nemi* is the circumference and *nābhi* is the centre of the wheel. Strangely enough the Buddhists have borrowed this description of the *Kāla-chakra* or *Brahma-chakra* almost *verbatim* for the *Dhamma-chakra* as given in the *Lalita Vistara :*

"O monks! then at that time the Bodhisattva of great strength named *Dharma-chakra-pravartī*, with the quickening of *Chitta* set in motion the *Chakra*, that was studded with many jewels, adorned with many gems, decorated with a variety of bejewelled ornaments, of thousand spokes, of thousand rays, having a navel, with a felly, with a flower garland, with golden festoons, with a row of ringing bells, with a palm impression of fragrant substances, with a full vase, with the *nandyāvarta* design, beautified by the *svastika* mark, adorned by cloths dyed in variegated colours, besmeared with unguents, having fragrant garlands of heavenly flowers, invested with all kinds of designs, which appeared before the Tathāgata for the purpose of setting it in motion by the potency of his previous meditation, purified by the ideals of the Bodhisattva, deserving honour by the Tathāgatas, invoked by all the Tathāgatas, Arhats and Enlightened Ones, which they had repeatedly set in motion in the preceding ages"[4].

Several important facts about the Buddhist *Chakra* are specifically mentioned here; for example, it was a *Chakra* of one thousand spokes, emitting a thousand rays of light; with a centre (*nābhi*), a full vase (*Pūrṇa-kumbha*, cf. AV. XIX. 53.1, *pūrṇaḥ kumbha adhi kāla āhitaḥ*), and a *svastika* mark which again was the symbol of Sūrya and inherent in the centre of each wheel.

The worship of the wheel was an intimate part of the popular cult. It has been preserved up to now in every Hindu household where the commencement

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[1] द्वादशारं न हि तज्जराय वर्वर्ति चक्रं परिद्यामृतस्य । RV. I. 164.11.

[2] सनेमि चक्रंम जरं वि वावृत । RV. I. 164.14.

[3] RV. I. 164. 2, 48.

[4] सहचित्तोत्पादधर्मचक्रप्रवर्ती नाम बोधिसत्त्वो महासत्त्वस्तस्यां वेलायां चक्रं सर्वरत्नप्रत्युप्तं सर्वरत्नप्रशोभितं नानारत्नालंकारव्यूहविभूषितं सहस्रारं सहस्ररश्मि सनाभिकं सनेमिकं सपुष्पदाम सहेमजालं सगन्धहस्तं सपूर्ण-कुम्भं सनन्दिकावर्तं सस्वस्तिकालंकृतं···सर्वाकारवरोपेतं तथागताय धर्मचक्रप्रवर्तनाय···पूर्वकैस्तथागतैरर्हद्भिः सम्यक्संबुद्धैः प्रत्येषितं प्रवर्तितपूर्वं च धर्मचक्रमुपनामयति स्म । *Lalita Vistara*, Vaidya ed. p. 302.

of the marriage ceremony takes place with offering worship to the wheel of the Potter (*Chakra-pūjā*, Hindi *Chāka-pūjā*), who is named as Prajāpati. Its meaning is obvious that Marriage is by far the most important institution by which the wheel of the Creator is kept revolving for ever. All the women inmates of the house visit the Potter's wheel and perform the ceremony there. There is hardly any other cult of such universal hold as *Chakra*-worship.

We have thus seen that the *Chakra-stambha* with its tall shaft, pot and foliage, round drum showing eight figures, four sejant lions, and the Great Wheel on the top, stands as a monument informed with deep meaning, expressed artistically in a manner which is apparently concealed but revealed to the initiate eye. Every symbol is susceptible of an expanding meaning at several levels like Man himself, whose personality is unfolding in many ways. The complete pillar also may be taken as the symbol of Man, the Full Vase with foliage signifying his origin and birth, the abacus with its fourfold patterns man's physical life on earth, the four lions his *Prāṇic* or vital energies, and lastly the Mahā-Chakra on the top the powers of his mind, and the tall shaft below as the *Stambha* or support of his whole personality.

So virtually the complex symbolism of the Sārnāth Pillar well answers to the statement of Vincent Smith that "ignenious commentators might discover other meanings in the symbolism" (*ZDMG*, 1911, p. 239). In short the *Chakra* as the symbol of the Cosmos, Time, Supreme Law (Vedic *Ṛita* and Buddhist *Dhamma*) and finally of the Divine Will as expressing itself through Man and society, was the common heritage of the entire Indian people. All agreed about its significance as has been demonstrated by the literary evidence set forth above. There is no option but to read it in its widest context to which it truly belongs, like several other symbols, as the *Svastika*, *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa*, Lotus etc. There was an esoteric language for conveying the metaphysics of thought in ancient India of which these were like the letters of the alphabet. The meaning of the symbol explodes according to the application to which it is put in accordance with the approach of the thinker. So we have seen how the *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* is symbolical of the source or the flood which produces the Lotus or the Life-principle. The second element, viz. the four animals represent the four-fold nature of creation in different types and variant modalities both in human society and in Nature. The four animals are in no way confined to Buddhism, but they occupy a wide canvas both in space and time. The four smaller wheels have also a significant place, viz. they stand for the unity of the Prāṇic

or Divine principle that is in Man together with the variations of the four physical types into which the world is divided. The Buddhist texts uniformly speak of the rolling of the Wheel in four directions and thus the four wheels on the drum stand for the principle of unity in diversity which is the characteristic of life. Whether we speak of Brahmā as having become four-faced, or of the four *Lokas*, or of the four-fold *Devas*, the essential fact remains the same. The truth of statment is valid everywhere. Ultimately it is the principle of quadruplication which was accepted universally (*Chatushṭayaṁ vā idaṁ sarvam*). The four lions stand as the symbol of the *Chakravartī* principle, that is rulership of a dominion (*Chakra*). Each State is a *Chakra* and so is each individual and in both spheres the temporal power is symbolised as the Lions. Buddha was a *Chakravartī*; Manu was a *Chakravartī*; Indra was the prototype of the *Chakravartī* ideal descending at the time of *Aindra Mahābhisheka* in all earthly rulers properly consecrated. The *Chakra* has been held by an endless chain of *Chakravartins*, just as the *Dharma-chakra* by many preceding Buddhas, Tathāgatas, Arhats, Ṛishis and wise men. The custody of the temporal power (*Kshatra*) and of the spiritual authority (*Brahma*) ultimately belongs to Man on the human plane and to Supreme Law-giver on the cosmic plane.

The meaning of the *Mahā-chakra* on the heads of the lions is as varied as that of the four animals, and surpirisingly enough its conception, as also the terminology explaining its symbolism, was common both to the Buddhist and the ancient Brāhmanical literature. We have also seen that the symbolism of all these four component parts beginning from the *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* and ending with the *Mahā-chakra* was rooted in the ancientmost Vedic tradition, and that without distinction of any particular religion it was the source of inspiration to all people. During the Gupta period we find a happy attempt to restate the meaning of the ancient symbol, specially by the *Bhāgavata* teachers taking it as the *Sudarśana-chakra* of Nārāyaṇa Vishṇu just as the Buddhists worshipped it as the *Dharma-chakra* of the Buddha. Both of them went to the highest length in its deification.

It was introducing a new concept in the sphere of polity and bringing it in conformity with the religious ideal similar to what was the idea of Aśoka when he indentified himself and his kingdom with the principle of *Dhamma*. This theory of a *Chakravartī* king paying homage to the *Dharma-chakra* ideal personified as **Fig. 57** *Chakra-purusha*, is graphically illustrated on the *Chakra-Vikrama* coin of Chandragupta Vikramāditya (380-412 A.D.).

As the Creator is the controller of *Kāla-chakra*, similarly the king as the leader of his people is the director of his times (*yuga-chakrasya netāram, Ahirbudhnya S.*36. 24). We actually find at Sānchī a pillar surmounted on its abacus by a free-standing male figure. He is said to be Vajrapāṇi, implying both the Buddha of that name and Indra as thunderbolt-bearer whose perfect incarnation is the annointed king by the ceremony of *Aindra Mahābhisheka.*

The new explanation of *Chakra*, given by the Bhāgavata teachers, included the entire field of knowledge (*artha-vyūha, ibid,* 10. 52) and of the scriptural texts (*śabdātmaka śāstra-vyūha*[1]) as the two forms of Sudarśana Chakra. They went still further in defining Chakra Sudarśana as the principle of life (*Prāṇa*), Divine Power (*Māyā*), Activity (*Kriyā*), Energy (*Śakti*), Emotions (*Bhāva*), Ideals (*Unmesha*), Exertion (*Udyama*), and Will (*Saṁkalpa*)[2].

We have also seen that not only the Wheel but also the Pillar as *Skambha* was a powerful idea rooted in Vedic symbolism and having a very special significance with respect to the cosmos and its transcendent source, viz., *Brahman*, who is the *Skambha* or the supporting axis of all the worlds and divine energies. Both wheel and pillar are the two sides of the same medal, the pillar standing for the fulcrum and the wheel for the motion or force that creates a field round the static centre of rest.

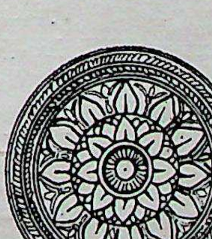
There is one question to which we may finally draw attention. There seems hardly any doubt that Aśoka himself was the author of the idea of the *Chakra-stambha*, but what was the *raison d'etre* which threw up this symbolism of the *Dharma-chakra* pillar. The one answer is that Aśoka aligned himself with the ideal of *Dhamma* after he ruled out war from his imperial policy and made peace the law of life. The *Dharma-chakra* typified the way of concord, love and service to all men. Following this the author of the *Lalita Vistara* calls *Dharma-chakra*, to be the *Sāma-chakra* or the Wheel of Peace (LV. 26). But we should go deeper into the historical and cultural background which gave birth to the *Dharma-chakra* idea of the emperor. He was living in an age when the great epics were transformed into *Dharma Saṁhitās*, and the ideal of the Janapada state was profoundly devoted to Dharma, i.e., the maximum inculcation of morality for each indi-

[1] एष प्राणमयो व्यूहो दिव्यः सौदर्शनः परः ।
शब्दार्थप्रविभागेन गदितस्ते मया मुने ॥ *Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā*, 12.52.

[2] प्राणो माया क्रिया शक्तिर्भाव उन्मेष उद्यमः ।
सुदर्शनं च संकल्पः शब्दाः पर्यायवाचकाः ॥ *Ibid*, 12.53

vidual. As a matter of fact the *Dharma* of the Buddha is based on the five primary principles of morality, viz., Truth, Non-injury, Non-stealing, Purity and Non-possession. Manu also propounded a code of *Dharma* consisting of ten moral virtues. Aśvapati, king of the Kaikeya country spoke of an ideal in which the Janapada state presided over by him was free from theft, incontinence and moral uncleanliness. This was also the *Chakravarti-Vrata* referred to in the *Dīgha Nikāya*.

According to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Dharma* was considered to be the highest principle in the world and truth was supported on *Dharma* (*Dharmo hi paramo loke dharme satyaṁ pratishṭhitam*, Ayodhyā, 21. 41). The essence of society and of creation is *Dharma* which is an adequate means for the attainment of all ends (*Dharmeṇa labhate sarvaṁ dharma-sāramidaṁ jagat*, Araṇya 9.30). Similarly in the *Mahābhārata*, *Dharma* is extolled in many ways, the climax being reached in the Bhārata-Sāvitrī colophon at the end. It was historically the age when the *Dharma-Sūtras* and the earliest *Dharma-Śāstras* were being drafted and the Law-givers were busy in explaining *Dharma* both in its practical and philosophical implications. At the end of such a period comes Aśoka with a problem created in his mind after a cruel war, and the solution to this biting problem he got in the conception of *Dharma* as it existed in his time. How he understood it is explained in his Edicts themselves—a simple code of universal moral conduct in which all men and women, high and low, Brāhmaṇas and Śramaṇas, state officers and the people were invited to participate with utmost sincerity and exertion. He created a new State infused with the spirit of *Dharma-vijaya*. This was the meaning of the DHARMA-CHAKRA-STAMBHA not only for Aśoka, but a meaning accepted in the entire Indian civilization as it has evolved through the ages.



APPENDIX I

REFERENCES TO THE FOUR GREAT ANIMALS [महा आजानेय पशु] IN INDIAN ART AND LITERATURE DEPICTED IN GROUPS OR SINGLY

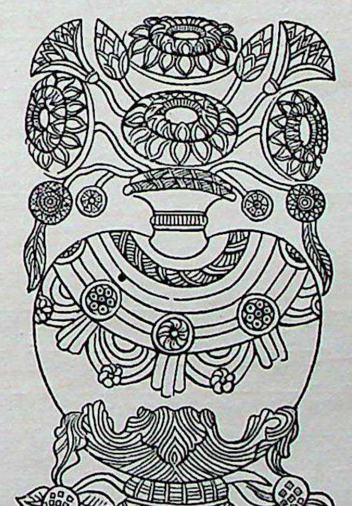
IN GROUPS

S. No.	SOURCE	ELEPHANT	BULL	HORSE	LION
1.	Indus Valley Animals marching in file, depicted on a prism (Marshall, Vol. III, pl. 118, fig. 10, A–B; Vol. II. pp. 395-6, 398)	elephant	(a cat-like animal)	(rhinoceros)	tiger
2.	Indus Valley On so-called famous Paśupati Seal	elephant	bull	(rhinoceros)	tiger
3.	Indus Valley Animals in composite figures (Marshall, pp. 389-390; specially Seal Nos. 376-381 and 383. See also p. 399)	(*a*) ram, with trunk and tusks of an elephant	horns of a bull	(human face)	and hind-quarters and legs of a tiger
		(*b*) necks of six animals joined, among which four are those of a unicorn, bull, antelope, tiger; other two probably those of a rhinoceros and an elephant.			
4.	Ṛigveda Indra compared to these Animals (IV. 16. 14)	*Mahāhastī* (RV. VIII. 81.1, IV. 16.14)	*Vṛishabha* (VII. 19.1, V. 103.1, etc.)		*Siṁha* (IV.16.14)
5.	Aitareya Up. (3.3)	*Hastī*	*Go*	*Aśva*	(*Purusha*)
6.	Vālmiki Rāmāyaṇa (Vulgate ed; Ayodhyā Kāṇḍa, 14. 36-38)	elephant (*Mattavara Vāraṇa*)	bull (*Kakudmān Pāṇḍura Vṛisha*)	horse (*Mahābala Hari-śreshṭha*)	lion (*Chaturdaṁ-shṭra Kesarī*)
7.	Chetiya Jātaka (Vol. III, No. 422, p. 460)	elephant	(*Chakra-Wheel*)	horse	lion
8.	SARNATH LION CAPITAL	ELEPHANT	BULL	HORSE	LION
9.	Ring-stone from Murtazi Ganja Patna (*JBRS* 1951)	These very four animals with two others.			
10.	Jīvābhigama Sūtra (3.1.113)	elephant	bull	horse	lion

S. No.	SOUSCE	ELEPHANT	BULL	HORSE	LION
11.	Amarāvatī Sculpture (Fergusson, *Tree and Serpent Worship, XCVIII*)	elephant	bull		lion
12.	Gītā (10, 27, 28, 30)	elephant (*Airāvata*)	cow (*Kāmadhenu*)	horse (*Uchchaiḥ-śravas*)	lion
13.	Niddesa Com. (pp. 89, and 310)	Cult devotees of these animals referred to as *Hatthivatika*	*Govatika*	*Assavatika*	
14.	Matsya Purāṇa (8.7-8)	elephant (*Airāvata*)	bull (*Vṛishabha*)	horse (*Uchchaiḥ-śravas*)	lion (*Siṁha*)
15.	Matsya Purāṇa (243.16)	elephant (*Nāga*)	bull (*Go*)	horse (*Turaṅgama*)	(goat)
16.	Harivaṁśa Purāṇa (I.4.11-12)	elephant (*Airāvata*)	bull (*Govṛisha*)	horse (*Uchchaiḥ-śravas*)	(*Garuḍa*)
17.	Harivaṁśa Purāṇa (II. 109)	elephant (*Matta Karī*)	bull (*Śveta Vṛisha*)	horse (*Haya*)	lion (*Siṁha-Vyāghra*)
18.	Padma Purāṇa (II. 26. 15-17)	elephant (*Airāvaṇa*)	bull *ovṛisha*)	horse (*Uchchaiḥ-śravas*)	lion (*Siṁha*)
19.	Padma Purāṇa (Bhūmi Khaṇḍa, 27)	elephant (*Kuñjara-rūpa*)	bull (*Gorūpa*)	[buffalo] (*Māhisha-rūpa*)	lion (*Harirūpa*)
20.	Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa (I.56.25)	elephant (*Airāvata*)	cow (*Kāmadhuk*)	horse (*Uchchaiḥ-śravas*)	lion (*Mṛigādhipa*)
21.	Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa (I.249. 12-14)	elephant (*Airāvata*)	bull (*Govṛisha*)	horse (*Uchchaiḥ-śravas*)	lion (*Sāradūla*)
22.	Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa (III.221. 47-48 ; see also I. 109. 9-10)	elephant (*Airāvata*)	bull (*Śiva's Vṛisha*, i.e. Nandī)	horsee (*Uchchaiḥ-śravas*)	(*Garuḍa*)
23.	Divyāvadāna (p.45) List of Animals carried in procession with *Māṅgalika* objects.	elephant (*Gaja*)	bull (*Vṛishabha*)	horse (*Aśva*)	lion (*Siṁha-Vyāghra*)
24.	Divyāvadāna (p. 248) Seen among ten objects in a dream by Sumati	white elephant		Haṁsas	lion
25.	Divyāvadāna (p. 291)	elephant (*Hastī*)	bull (*Go*)	horse (*Aśva*)	(ram)
26.	Divyāvadāna (pp. 267, and 171) Buddha compared to the animals	elephant (*Gajarāja*)	bull (*Vṛishabha*)	(*Haṁsa & Suparṇī*)	lion (*Siṁha*)

S. No.	SOURCE	ELEPHANT	BULL	HORSE	LION
27.	Anurādhapur, Ceylon On Four Moon-stones (*Chandraśilā*) (Smith, *ZDMG.*, Vol. *LXV*, 1911 ; *JRAS.*, 1946, p : 123 ; Vogel, *Goose* in *Indian Art & Literature*, pl. X)	(*a*) elephant (*b*) elephant (*c*) elephant (*d*) elephant	bull bull bull	horse horse horse horse	lion lion lion
28.	Anurādhapur, Ceylon Metallic figures in four directions round the Stūpa (Smith, *A History of Art in India & Ceylon* 1930, p. 18, note 2 ; *JRAS.*, 1946, p. 145)	Iron Elephant	Silver Bull	Copper Horse	Gold Lion
29.	Terracotta plaque of the Central Museum at Lahore (D. R. Sahni, *Guide to the Buddhist Ruins of Sarnath*, fifth ed., 1933, p. 40)	elephant	bull	horse	lion
30.	Steatite plaque from Akra, Now in Indian Museum, Calcutta.	elephant	bull	horse	lion
31.	Īśānaśivagurudeva-paddhati (Vol. III. p. 103)	elephant	bull	(*Bhūta*)	lion
32.	Si-Yu-Ki Translated by Beal, Vol. I, pp. 9-17	gold elephant	silver ox	lapio lazuli horse	crystal lion
33.	Ancient Khmer (B. Rowland, *The Art & Architecture of India*, p. 258, note 12). Attached to a tank as gargoyles	elephant	bull	horse	lion
34.	Padmāvata of Jāyasī Refers to four Gaḍhapatis.	Gajapati	•	Aśvapati	[Narpapati]
35.	Rāmachandrikā of Keśava Dāsa (16th cent.)	elephant (*Dantirāja*)	bull (*Nandī*)	horse (*Bājirāja*)	lion (*Siṁha*)
36.	Rājasthānī Painting (National Museum)	elephant	bull	horse	Vyāla
37.	Burmese Manuscript (Sahni, *Guide to Sarnath* p. 40)	elephant	bull	horse	lion
38.	Artificial Meru Parvata in Bangkok (B. Rowland, *The Art & Architecture of India*, p. 41.	elephant	bull	horse	lion

S. No.	SOURCE	ELEPHANT	BULL	HORSE	LION
39.	Tibetan Kailāsa Purāṇa	elephant-mouthed	peacock-mouthed	horse-mouthed	lion-mouthed
40.	Bengal Kanthā (19th cent.), now in Bharat Kala Bhavan, B.H.U.	elephant	bull	horse	lion
		DEPICTED SINGLY			
1.	Indus Valley, On Seals (Marshall, pp. 382-388)	elephant	bull	Unicorn or rhinoceros	tiger
2.	Indus Valley On Copper Tablets (*Ibid*, p. 399)	elephant	bull	rhinoceros	tiger
3.	Mauryan Capitals (Smith, *ZDMG*. Vol. *LXV*, 1911, p. 2 36-7)	elephant (at Sankisā)	bull (at Rāmpurvā)	horse (?) (at Rummindei)	lion (at Basārh, Lauriā Nandangarh, Rāmpurvā etc.)
4.	Early Indian Coins (Foucher, *Beginnings of Buddhist Art*, pl. I, fig. 9-12).	elephant	bull	horse	lion



APPENDIX II

दळ्हनेमिचक्कवत्तिराजा

[From Chakkavatti-Suttaṁ, Dīgha Nikāya, III ; see translation pp. 43-46.]

भूतपुब्बं, भिक्खवे, राजा दळ्हनेमि नाम अहोसि चक्कवत्ती धम्मिको धम्मराजा चातुरन्तो विजितावी जनपदत्थावरियप्पत्तो सत्तरतनसमन्नागतो । तस्सिमानि सत्त रतनानि अहेसुं, सेय्यथिदं-चक्करतनं, हत्थिरतनं, अस्सरतनं, मणिरतनं, इत्थिरतनं, गहपतिरतनं, परिणायकरतनमेव सत्तमं । परोसहस्सं खो पनस्स पुत्ता अहेसुं सूरा वीरङ्गरूपा परसेनप्पमद्दना । सो इमं पथविं सागरपरियन्तं अदण्डेन असत्थेन धम्मेन अभिविजिय अज्झावसि ।

"अथ खो, भिक्खवे, राजा दळ्हनेमि बहुन्नं वस्सानं बहुन्नं वस्ससतानं बहुन्नं वस्ससहस्सानं अच्चयेन अञ्ञतरं पुरिसं आमन्तेसि—'यदा त्वं, अम्भो पुरिस, पस्सेय्यासि दिब्बं चक्करतनं ओसक्कितं ठाना चुतं, अथ मे आरोचेय्यासी'ति । 'एवं, देवा'ति खो, भिक्खवे, सो पुरिसो रञ्ञो दळ्हनेमिस्स पच्चस्सोसि । अद्दसा खो, भिक्खवे सो पुरिसो बहुन्नं वस्सानं बहुन्नं वस्ससतानं बहुन्नं वस्ससहस्सानं अच्चयेन दिब्बं चक्करतनं ओसक्कितं ठाना चुतं । दिस्वान येन राजा दळ्हनेमि तेनुपसङ्कमि; उपसङ्कमित्वा राजानं दळ्हनेमिं एतदवोच—'यग्घे, देव, जानेय्यासि, दिब्बं ते चक्करतनं ओसक्कितं ठाना चुतं' ति । अथ खो, भिक्खवे, राजा दळ्हनेमि जेट्ठपुत्तं कुमारं आमन्तापेत्वा एतदवोच—'दिब्बं किर मे, तात कुमार, चक्करतनं ओसक्कितं ठाना चुतं । सुतं खो पन मेतं—यस्स रञ्ञो चक्कवत्तिस्स दिब्बं चक्करतनं ओसक्कति ठाना चवति, न दानि तेन रञ्ञा चिरं जीवितब्बं होती ति । भुत्ता खो पन मे मानुसका कामा । समयो दानि मे दिब्बे कामे परियेसितुं । एहि त्वं, तात कुमार, इमं समुद्दपरियन्तं पथविं पटिपज्ज । अहं पन केसमस्सुं ओहारेत्वा कासायानि वत्थानि अच्छादेत्वा अगारस्मा अनगारियं पब्बजिस्सामी'ति ।

"अथ खो, भिक्खवे, राजा दळ्हनेमि जेट्ठपुत्तं कुमारं साधुकं रज्जे समनुसासित्वा केसमस्सुं ओहारेत्वा कासायानि वत्थानि अच्छादेत्वा अगारस्मा अनगारियं पब्बजि । सत्ताहपब्बजिते खो पन, भिक्खवे, राजिसिम्हि दिब्बं चक्करतनं अन्तरधायि ।

"अथ खो, भिक्खवे, अञ्ञतरो पुरिसो येन राजा खत्तियो मुद्धाभिसित्तो तेनुपसङ्कमि; उपसङ्कमित्वा राजानं खत्तियं मुद्धाभिसित्तं एतदवोच—'यग्घे, देव, जानेय्यासि, दिब्बं चक्करतनं अन्तरहितं' ति ! अथ खो, भिक्खवे, राजा खत्तियो मुद्धाभिसित्तो दिब्बे चक्करतने अन्तरहिते अनत्तमनो अहोसि, अनत्तमनतं च पटिसंवेदेसि । सो येन राजिसि तेनुपसङ्कमि; उपसङ्कमित्वा राजिसिं एतदवोच—'यग्घे, देव, जानेय्यासि, दिब्बं चक्करतनं अन्तरहितं'ति ! एवं वुत्ते, भिक्खवे, राजिसि राजानं खत्तियं मुद्धाभिसित्तं एतदवोच—'मा खो त्वं, तात, दिब्बे चक्करतने अन्तरहिते अनत्तमनो अहोसि, मा अनत्तमनतं च पटिसंवेदेसि । न हि ते, तात, दिब्बं चक्करतनं पेत्तिकं दायज्जं । इङ्घ त्वं, तात, अरिये चक्कवत्तिवत्ते वत्ताहि । ठानं खो पनेतं विज्जति यं ते अरिये चक्कवत्तिवत्ते वत्तमानस्स तदहुपोसथे पन्नरसे सीसंन्हातस्स उपोसथिकस्स उपरिपासादवरगतस्स दिब्बं चक्करतनं पातुभविस्सति सहस्सारं सनेमिकं सनाभिकं सब्बाकारपरिपूरं' ति ।

चक्कवत्तिअरियवत्तं

'कतमं पन तं, देव, अरियं चक्कवत्तिवत्त'न्ति ?

'तेन हि त्वं, तात, धम्मं येव निस्साय धम्मं सक्करोन्तो धम्मं गरुं करोन्तो धम्मं मानेन्तो धम्मं पूजेन्तो धम्मं अपचायमानो धम्मद्धजो धम्मकेतु धम्माधिपतेय्यो धम्मिकं रक्खावरणगुत्तिं संविदहस्सु अन्तोजनस्मिं बलकायस्मिं खत्तियेसु अनुयन्तेसु ब्राह्मणगहपतिकेसु नेगमजानपदेसु समणब्राह्मणेसु मिगपक्खीसु। मा च ते, तात, विजिते अधम्मकारो पवत्तित्थ। ये च ते, तात, विजिते, अधना अस्सु तेसं च धनमनुप्पदेय्यासि। ये च ते, तात, विजिते समणब्राह्मणा मदप्पमादा पटिविरता खन्तिसोरच्चे निविट्ठा एकमत्तानं दमेन्ति एकमत्तानं समेन्ति एकमत्तानं परिनिब्बापेन्ति, ते कालेन कालं उपसङ्कमित्वा परिपुच्छेय्यासि परिपञ्हेय्यासि–किं, भन्ते, कुशलं, किं अकुशलं, किं सावज्जं, किं अनवज्जं, किं सेवितब्बं, किं न सेवितब्बं, किं मे करीयमानं दीघरत्तं अहिताय दुक्खाय अस्स, किं वा पन मे करीयमानं दीघरत्तं हिताय सुखाय अस्सा ति ? तेसं सुत्वा यं अकुशलं तं अभिनिवज्जेय्यासि, यं कुशलं तं समादाय वत्तेय्यासि। इदं खो, तात, तं अरियं चक्कवत्तिवत्त'न्ति।

चक्करतनं

"एवं, देवा'ति खो, भिक्खवे, राजा खत्तियो मुद्धाभिसित्तो राजिसिस्स पटिस्सुत्वा अरिये चक्कवत्तिवत्ते वत्ति। तस्स अरिये चक्कवत्तिवत्ते वत्तमानस्स तदहुपोसथे पन्नरसे सीसन्हातस्स उपोसथिकस्स उपरिपासादवरगतस्स दिब्बं चक्करतनं पातुरहोसि सहस्सारं सनेमिकं सनाभिकं सब्बाकारपरिपूरं। दिस्वान रञ्ञो खत्तियस्स मुद्धाभिसित्तस्स एतदहोसि—'सुतं खो पन मेतं—यस्स रञ्ञो खत्तियस्स मुद्धाभिसित्तस्स तदहुपोसथे पन्नरसे सीसंन्हातस्स उपोसथिकस्स उपरिपासादवरगतस्स दिब्बं चक्करतनं पातुभवति सहस्सारं सनेमिकं सनाभिकं सब्बाकारपरिपूरं, सो होति राजा चक्कवत्ती। अस्सं नु खो अहं राजा चक्कवत्ती'ति।

"अथ खो, भिक्खवे, राजा खत्तियो मुद्धाभिसित्तो उट्ठायासना एकंसं उतरासङ्गं करित्वा वामेन हत्थेन भिङ्कारं गहेत्वा दक्खिणेन हत्थेन चक्करतनं अब्भुक्किरि—'पवत्ततु भवं चक्करतनं, अभिविजिनातु भवं चक्करतन'न्ति।

"अथ खो तं, भिक्खवे, चक्करतनं पुरत्थिमं दिसं पवत्ति, अन्वदेव राजा चक्कवत्ती सद्धिं चतुरङ्गिनिया सेनाय। यस्मिं खो पन, भिक्खवे, पदेसे चक्करतनं पतिट्ठासि तत्थ राजा चक्कवत्ती वासं उपगच्छि सद्धिं चतुरङ्गिनिया सेनाय। ये खो पन, भिक्खवे, पुरत्थिमाय दिसाय पटिराजानो ते राजानं चक्कवत्तिं उपसङ्कमित्वा एवमाहंसु—"एहि खो, महाराज। स्वागतं ते, महाराज। सकं ते, महाराज। अनुसास, महाराजा'ति। राजा चक्कवत्ती एवमाह—'पाणो न हन्तब्बो, अदिन्नं नादातब्बं, कामेसुमिच्छा न चरितब्बा, मुसा न भासितब्बा, मज्जं न पातब्बं, यथाभुक्तं च भुञ्जथा'ति। ये खो पन, भिक्खवे, पुरत्थिमाय दिशाय पटिराजानो ते रञ्ञो चक्कवत्तिस्स अनुयन्ता अहेसुं।

"अथ खो तं, भिक्खवे, चक्करतनं पुरत्थिमं समुद्दं अज्झोगाहेत्वा पच्चुत्तरित्वा दक्खिणं दिसं पवत्ति··· पे०···दक्खिणं समुद्दं अज्झोगाहेत्वा पच्चुत्तरित्वा पच्छिमं दिसं पवत्ति, अन्वदेव राजा चक्कवत्ती सद्धिं चतुरङ्गिनिया सेनाय। यस्मिं खो पन, भिक्खवे, पदेसे दिब्बं चक्करतनं पतिट्ठासि, तत्थ राजा चक्कवती वासं उपगच्छि सद्धिं चतुरङ्गिनिया सेनाय। ये खो पन, भिक्खवे पच्छिमाय दिसाय पटिराजानो ते राजानं चक्कवत्तिं उपसङ्कमित्वा एवमाहंसु—'एहि खो, महाराज। स्वागतं ते, महाराज। सकं ते, महाराज। अनुसास, महाराजा'ति।

राजा चक्कवत्ती एवमाह—‘पाणो न हन्तब्बो, अदिन्नं नादातब्बं, कामेसुमिच्छा न चरितब्बा, मुसा न भासितब्बा, मज्जं न पातब्बं, यथाभुत्तं च भुञ्जथा'ति । ये खो पन, भिक्खवे, पच्छिमाय दिसाय पटिराजानो ते रञ्ञो चक्कवत्तिस्स अनुयन्ता अहेसुं ।

“अथ खो तं, भिक्खवे, चक्करतनं पच्छिमं समुद्दं अज्झोगाहेत्वा पच्चुत्तरित्वा उत्तरं दिसं पवत्ति, अन्वदेव राजा चक्कवत्ती सद्धिं चतुरङ्गिनिया सेनाय । यस्मिं खो पन, भिक्खवे, पदेसे दिब्बं चक्करतनं पतिट्ठासि, तत्थ राजा चक्कवत्ती वासं उपगच्छि सद्धिं चतुरङ्गिनिया सेनाय । ये खो पन, भिक्खवे, उत्तराय दिसाय पटि-पटिराजानो ते राजानं चक्कवत्तिं उपसङ्कमित्वा एवमाहंसु—‘एहि खो, महाराज । स्वागतं ते, महाराज । सकं ते, महाराज । अनुसास, महाराजा'ति । राजा चक्कवती एवमाह—पाणो न हन्तब्बो, अदिन्नं नादातब्बं, कामेसुमिच्छा न चरितब्बा, मुसा न भासितब्बा, मज्जं न पातब्बं, यथाभुत्तं च भुञ्जथा'ति । ये खो पन, भिक्खवे, उत्तराय दिसाय पटिराजानो ते रञ्ञो चक्कवत्तिस्स अनुयन्ता अहेसुं ।

“अथ खो तं, भिक्खवे, चक्करतनं समुद्दपरियन्तं पथविं अभिविजिनित्वा तमेव राजधानिं पच्चागन्त्वा रञ्ञो चक्कवत्तिस्स अन्तेपुरद्वारे अत्थकरणपमुखे अक्खाहतं मञ्ञे अट्ठासि, रञ्ञो चक्कवत्तिस्स अन्तेपुरं उपसोभयमानं ।

दीघनिकाय, III, pp. 58-63 (Devanāgarī ed., pp. 46-50)



APPENDIX III

From SI-YU-KI, Translated by S. Beal, Vol. I, pp. 9-17.

This Sahaloka (Soh-lo) world is the three-thousand-great-thousand system of worlds (*chiliocosm*), over which one Buddha exercised spiritual authority (*converts and controls*). In the middle of the great chiliocosm, illuminated by one sun and moon, are the four continents, in which all the Buddhas, lords of the world, appear by apparitional birth, and here also die, for the purpose of guiding holy men and worldly men.

The mountain called Sumeru stands up in the midst of the great sea firmly fixed on a circle of gold, around which mountain the sun and moon revolve ; this mountain is perfected by (composed of) four precious substances, and is the abode of the Devas. Around this are seven mountain-ranges and seven seas ; between each range a flowing sea of the eight peculiar qualities. Outside the seven golden mountain-range is the salt sea, There are four lands (countries or islands, *dvīpas*) in the salt sea, which are inhabited. On the east, (Pūrva) Videha ; on the south, Jambudvīpa ; on the west, Godhanya ; on the north, Kurudvīpa.

A golden-wheel monarch rules righteously the four ; a silver-wheel monarch rules the three (excepting Kuru) ; a copper-wheel monarch rules over two (excepting Kuru and Godhanya) ; and an iron-wheel monarch rules over Jambudvīpa only. When first a wheel-king is established in power a great wheel-gem appears floating in space, and coming towards him, its character—whether gold, silver, copper, or iron—determines the king's destiny and his name.

In the middle of Jambudvīpa there is, a lake called ANAVATAPTA, to the south of the Fragrant Mountains and to the north of the great Snowy Mountains ; it is 800 li and more in circuit, its sides are composed of gold, silver, lapis-lazuli, and crystal ; golden sands lie at the bottom, and its water are clear as a mirror. The great earth Bodhisattva, by the power of his vow, transforms himself into a Nāga-rāja and dwells therein ; from his dwelling the cool waters proceed forth and enrich Jambudvīpa (Shen-pu-chau).

From eastern side of the lake, through the mouth of a silver ox, flows the Ganges (King-kia) river ; encircling the lake once, it enters the south-eastern seas.

From the south of the lake, through a golden elephant's mouth, proceeds the Sindhu (Sin-to) river ; encircling the lake once, it flows into the south-western sea.

From the western side of the lake, from the mouth of a horse of lapis-lazuli, proceeds the river Vakshu (Po-tsu), and encricling the lake once, it falls into the north-western sea. From the north side of the lake, through the mouth of a crystal lion, proceeds the river Sītā (Si-to), and encircling lake once, it falls into the north-eastern sea. They also say that the streams of this river Sītā, entering the earth, flow out beneath the Tsih rock mountain, and give rise to the river of the middle country (China).

At the time when there is no paramount wheel-monarch, then the land of Jambudvīpa has four rulers.

On the south "the lord of elephants" the land here is warm and humid, suitable for elephants.

On the west "the lord of treasures" the land borders on the sea, and abounds in gems.

On the north "the lord of horses" ; the country is cold and hard, suitable for horses.

On the east "the lord of men" ; the climate is soft and agreeable (*exhilarating*), and therefore there are many men.

In the country of "the lord of elephants" the people are quick and enthusiastic, and entirely given to learning. They cultivate especially magical arts. They wear a robe thrown across them, with their right shoulder bare ; their hair is done up in a ball on the top, and left undressed on the four sides. Their various tribes occupy different towns ; their houses are built stage over stage.

In the country of "the lord of treasures" the people have no politeness or justice. They accummulate wealth. Their dress is short, with a left skirt. They cut their hair and cultivate their moustache. They dwell in walled towns and are eager in profiting by trade.

The people of the country of "the lord of horses" are naturally (*t'ien tsz'*) wild and fierce. They are cruel in disposition ; they slaughter (*animals*) and live under large felt tents ; they divide like birds (*going here and there*) attending their flocks.

The land of "the lord of men" is distinguished for the wisdom and virtue and justice of the people. They wear a head-covering and a girdle ; the end of their dress (*girdle*) hangs to the right. They have carriages and robes according to rank ; they cling to the soil and hardly ever change their abode ; they are very earnest in work, and divided into classes.

With respect to the people belonging to these three rulers, the eastern region is considered the best ; the doors of their dwellings open towards the east, and when the sun rises in the morning they turn towards it and salute it. In this country the south side is considered the most honourable. Such are the leading characteristics in respect of manners and customs relating to these regions.

But with regard to the rules of politeness observed between the prince and his subjects, between superiors and inferiors, and with respect to laws and literature, the land of "the lord of men" is greatly in advance. The country of "the lord of elephants" is distinguished for rules which relates to purifying the heart and release from the ties of life and death ; this is its leading excellency. With these things the sacred books and the royal decrees are occupied. Hearing the reports of the native races and diligently searching out things old and new, and examining those things which came before his eyes and ears, it is thus he (i.e., Hiuen Tsiang) obtained information.

APPENDIX IV

From Vincent Smith's Article 'The Monolithic Pillars or Columns of Aśoka', in ZDMG., Vol. LXV, 1911.

It thus appears that the lion symbol was the favourite. The elephant, bull, and horse also occur, though rarely, the Wheel appears once only by itself, and either once or twice in combination with four lions. Garuḍa occurs only once, and the statue of a man once. The four quadrupeds—lion, elephant, bull and horse—are all carved in relief on the edge of the abacus of the Sārnāth capital. In some other cases bas-relief of geese or palmettes occupy the same position.

The meaning of the animal symbolism, which has not been always understood, requires explanation. The four quadrupeds---lion, elephant, bull and horse—owe their selection primarily to the fact that they were regarded as the guardians of the four quarters, namely, according to the Ceylonese arrangement, the lion of the north, the elephant of the east, the bull of the west, and the horse of the south. This explanation, already partly hinted at by a note of Dr. Burgess in Beal's translation of Hiuen Tsang (II, p. 67, note 73), was made plain to me by the account of certain discoveries made under the direction of Mr. H. C. P. Bell, Archaeological Commissioner of Ceylon, in the ruins of the Vijayārāma monastery at Anurādhapura, dating from about the eighth century.

Mr. Bell's Assistant found under each of the porches of the monastery a cubical brick cell, 1 foot 6 inches square. Each such cell contained a small double faced human figure of bronze, and bronze human figures were at once recognised as being those of the devas, or demi-gods, in charge of the four quarters of the universe, namely, Dhṛitarāshṭra, of the east; Virūḍha, of the south; Virūpāksha, chief of the Nāgas, of the west; and Vaiśravaṇa or Kuvera, of the north. Each image has his distinctive attribute,s as explained in Mr. Bell's report, which need not be enumerated here. The important point for our present purpose is the position of the several objects.

The contents of the cells were as follows :—

Eastern—Dhṛitarāshṭra and elephant;
Southern—Virūḍha and horse;
Western—Virūpāksha and bull;
Northern—Vaiśravaṇa (Kubera) and lion.

It is plain that these foundation deposits were made in order to place the monastery under the care of the guardians of the four quarters, who are appointed by Indra to defend the world against the Asuras or demons. They also, no doubt, refer to the universality of the Church, the 'congregation from the four quarters, present and absent' (agata anagata Chatudisa sagasa). The same four quardrupeds recur on the earlier 'moonstones' of Ceylon, the order being sometimes varied, and their introduction on the Aśokan monuments must have similar significance[1]).

All widely popular symbols have more meanings than one. The lion, for instance, symbolized Gautama Buddha himself, 'the lion of the Śākyas', and that would be one good reason for the frequent occurrence of the lion on the Aśokan columns. But probably the most potent reason was the association of the animal with the demi-god Kubera or Vaiśravaṇa, guardian of the North, and King of the Yakshas, who was a favourite object of worship under various names throughout the Buddhist world from Khotan to Ceylon[2]).

The allocation of the quadrupeds to the four quarters in Northern India differed from that current in Ceylon, except as regards the lion, which in both countries represented the north. The difference is apparent from Hiuen Tsang's enumeration of the mouths of the mythical *Anavatapta* Lake in the centre of Jambudvīpa, which is as follows:—

Ox mouth on east,
Elephent mouth on south,
Horse mouth on west,
Lion mouth on north.

The occurrence of the bull (ox) on one of the twin pillars standing at the eastern gate of the Jetavana at Śrāvastī (No 20) is thus seen to be appropriate. Similarly, at the Lumbini Garden, the column (No 14) standing to the west of the shrine of the Nativity was correctly surmounted by a horse, while the monument placed to the north of the Monkey Tank at Vaiśālī (No 7) was properly crowned by a lion. In other cases our knowledge of details is not sufficient to warrant particular explanations of the reasons why one animal rather than another was selected. But, as already observed, the preference shown for the

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[1] H. C. P. Bell, *Sixth Progress Report, Anurādhapura* ; *for July to Sept. 1891, being Sessional Paper XII of 1996*, pp. 8, 16, Plates XXII—XXVI.

[2] Several illustrations of Kubera, Vaiśravaṇa, or Jambhala will appear in my forthcoming work. *A History of Fine Art in India and Ceylon* (Clarendon Press), now in the press.

lion can be easily accounted for. It is possible that the selection of the symbol might be influenced occasionally by the origin or nationality of the monks of an adjoining monastery. A column erected near a monastery occupied by Southern monks might well be placed under the care of the guardian of the South. But it is certainly clear that in all cases the quardruped was selected as the guardian of a particular quarter of the world, associated with a certain deva.

The significance of the wheel as the symbol of the Good Law is, of course, familiar to everybody.

The meaning of the more complex symbolism of the Sārnāth capital is almost equally legible. The column and adjoining stūpa and temple were erected to mark that most sacred spot, where the Wheel of the Law was first turned, or, in plain English, Buddhist doctrine was publicly preached for the first time. The wheel therefore was an obligatory symbol. The four lions back to back guarded the north against the demons and also symbolized the Master of the Law. Thus they were properly placed as supporting the wheel. The number four probably had some mystic significance which does not occur to me. The four quadrupeds in bas-relief on the abacus painly mean that the monument was under the protection not only of the guardian of the north, but under that of the wardens of all the four quarters. They further mean that the proclamation of the Good Law was the concern and blessing of the Church of the whole world. Ingenious commentators might discover other meanings in the symbolism, but so much is enough.

APPENDIX V

A

From Sahni's *Guide to the Buddhist Ruins of Sarnath*, p. 40.

The late Dr. Bloch was of the opinion that the four figures on the abacus symbolised the goddess Durgā, Indra, Śiva and Sūrya, whose vehicles these animals respectively are and that they were carved upon this capital to signify the subordination of these Brahmanical deities to Gautama Buddha and his law. Dr. Vogel identified these figures as representations of four noble beasts (Mahājāneya) of the Buddhists, used merely as ornamental motifs. I owe the correct explanation of these reliefs to a Burmese Pali scholar whom I had the pleasure of showing round the Museum some years ago. This is that the drum with the four animals is intended to represent the Anotatta lake of the Buddhist texts, in which the Buddha used to bathe. It was also with the water of this lake that his mother Mahāmāyā was bathed before her conception. The lake, as described and illustrated in a Buddhist manuscript on palm leaves in Burmese characters, had four mouths, guarded by these very animals, namely, by the lion on the east, the elephant on the south, etc. I have no doubt that in its original position on the top of the Aśoka pillar, this capital must have been oriented in the same manner, so that the animals faced their respective directions. It is interesting to note that the Archaeological Section of the Central Museum at Lahore contains a small square terracotta plaque showing a circular depression in the middle surrounded by the same four animals, arranged in the same order. This plaque is, to my mind, a true representation of the Anotatta lake and must have been used for worship. The only point of difference between this tablet and the relief on the Aśoka capital is that, whereas the four animals on the latter are separated by representations of the Buddhist Wheel of the Law (*Dharmachakra*), the intervening symbols on the terracotta tablet in the Lahore Museum are a conch, a bowl containing the hair of the Buddha (Pāli, *chūlāmaho*), the Wheel of the Law and the *triratna* (three jewel) symbol.

B

From Sahni's *Catalogue of the Museum of Archaeology at Sarnath*, pp. 28-31

Capital of Aśoka Column (ht. 7′; width across the abacus 2′10″). The lower portion, 2′ in height, has, as usual, the shape of a bell decorated with conventional petals in Persepolitan style. They are sixteen in number.

The necking above the bell is circular in horizontal section and has a torus moulding with plain surface. The middle portion which is fashioned into a circular abacus resembling a common drum, 1′1½″ high, is decorated with four wheels, of twenty-four spokes each, in high relief. The ends of the axles are left rough, from which it may be surmised that they were originally covered with caps probably of precious metal. This is proved by the existence of three fine holes pierced into the rim of each axle, into which metal pins were evidently inserted to keep the caps in position. The spaces between the wheels are occupied by the figures of an elephant, a bull, a horse and a lion, following each other from right to left in the direction of the *pradakshiṇā*. Three of these animals are represented as walking, the horse as running at full gallop. These figures are all more or less damaged, but they are wonderfully life-like and their pose graceful.

The abacus is surmounted with figures of four life-sized lions placed back to back, so that only the fore-parts are shown. They are each 3′9″ high. Two of them are in perfect preservation. The heads of the other two were found detached and have been refixed. The upper jaw of one and the lower jaw of the other were not recovered. In place of eye-balls some sort of precious stones were originally inserted into the sockets, as is clearly shown by the existence of very fine holes in the upper and lower lids, which received thin iron pins to keep the jewels in position. One such pin still remains in the upper lid of the left eye of one of the lions.

The capital was carved out of a single block of sandstone but is now broken across just above the bell. It was originally surmounted by a wheel (*chakra*), the symbol of Buddhist Law, supported on a short stone shaft. The latter was not discovered, but its thickness can be estimated from the mortice whole, 8″ in diameter, drilled into the stone between the lions' heads. Of the wheel itself, four small fragments were found. The ends of thirteen spokes remain on these pieces. Their total number was presumably thirty-two.

The capital is one of the most magnificent specimens of art that have yet been discovered in the country. The accuracy of delineation and the feeling of symmetry which pervade every part of the sculpture are not met with except in the few sculptures on the other pillars of Aśoka, which have come down to us.

The material of which the capital is made is a black-spotted buff-coloured sandstone from Chuṇār, but of a much finer grain than the Chunār stone used in the construction of houses in Benares and its neighbourhood.

Of the shaft on which this capital originally rested four large fragments were discovered. In addition to these there is the lower portion, about 15′ in height, which is standing *in situ* and bears three inscriptions. The earliest one which is a record of Aśoka himself is an edict against schismatic monks and nuns who are threatened with expulsion from the Saṅgha or Buddhist Church. This epigraph originally consisted of eleven lines, but the first three have disappeared with the exception of the first two syllables of the first and second lines and the major portion of the third, which were recovered on three small detached fragments of the shaft. The remaining portion is in excellent preservation. The epigraph runs as follows:—

1. देवा[नंपिये पियदसि लाजा*]
2. एल.....................
3. पाट[लिपुते*]······ये केनपि संघे भेतवे ए चु खो
4. [भिखू वा भिखु] नि वा संघं भाखति से ओदातानि दुस[आ]नि संनंधापयिया आनावाससि
5. आवासयिये[।*] हेवं इयं सासने भिखुसंघसि च भिखुनिसंघसि च विंनपयितविये[।*]
6. हेवं देवानंपिये आहा [।*] हेदिसा च इका लिपी तुफाकंतिकं हुवा ति संसलनसि निखिता [।*]
7. इकं च लिपिं हेदिसमेव उपासकानंतिकं निखिपाथ[।*]ते पि च उपासका अनुपोसथं यावु
8. एतमेव सासनं विस्वंसयितवे[।*] अनुपोसथं च धुवाये इकिके महामाते पोसथाये
9. याति एतमेव सासनं विस्वंसयितवे आजानितवे च [।*] आवते च तुफाकं आहाले
10. सवत विवासयाथ तुफे एतेन वियंजनेन [।*] हेमेव सवेसु कोट-विसवेसु एतेन
11. वियंजनेन विवासापयाथा [॥*]

Translation

"His sacred Majesty King Piyadasi...........at Pāṭa [liputta]........... The Church is (not) by any one to be divided. But whosoever, monk or nun, shall break up the Church, shall be made to don white robes and made to dwell in another dwelling. Thus should this command be brought to notice in the order of monks and in the order of nuns.

"Thus saith his sacred Majesty. One such edict hath been inscribed at the place of assembly in order that it may be near you. And even such an edict ye must inscribe for the laity. And the laity also should come on the Sabbath-days in order to be inspired with faith in this edict. On every Sabbath-day regularly shall each superintendent (of the Law) come to Sabbath service to be inspired with faith in this Order and to learn it.

"And as far as your district (extendeth) ye must everywhere make (the edict) known according to the letter thereof. So, too in all fortified towns and provinces, ye must cause it to be made known according to the letter thereof".

The second inscription which consists of a single line, 4′ 8″ in length is of the Kushāṇa period and reads

......................र्पपरिगेह्ये रज्ञ अश्वघोषस्य चतरिशे सवछरे हेमत-पखे प्रथमे दिवसे दसमे ....

"In the fortieth year of *Rājan Aśvaghosha*, in the first fortnight of winter, on the tenth day.........".

The third inscription also consists of a single line, 1′9″ long, but it is inscribed in characters of the early Gupta period. It reads as follows :—

आ [चा] र्य्यनं स[म्मि] तियानं परिग्रह वात्सीपुत्रिकानां ।

"Homage of the masters of the Sammitiya (?) sect (and) of the Vātsīputrika school". This epigraph is of interest as it shows that the Vātsīputrikas were a branch of the Sammitiya school. The Sarvāstivādins, whose name is met with on the railing in the southern chapel of the Main Shrine, must have flourished side by side with the Sammitiyas at Sārnāth in the early Gupta period. In the time of Hiuen Thsang, the great convent at Sārnāth was entirely in the possession of the Sammitiya sect.

The identification of this column is still an open question. It is tempting to identify it with the column seen by Hiuen Thsang in front of the *Stūpa* built by Aśoka. It is highly polished and conforms well with the following description left by that traveller : "The stone is altogether as bright as jade. It is glistening, and sparkles like light." The fact of its being situated in what was undoubtedly the most important portion of the ancient *Saṅghārāma* of Sārnāth also points in the same direction. The main objections to this identification were summed up in 1907 by Dr. Marshall in the following words : "But even here we are not absolutely sure of our ground, for the Chinese traveller says that the column was 70 feet or thereabouts in height, while the one discovered could not have been more than 50, and on the other hand, he says nothing of Aśoka in connexion with it, nor does he mention either the inscription or the magnificent lion capital, which must have been an exceptionally striking feature. Again, if this is the column referred to by Hiuen Thsang, where is the stone *Stūpa*

'in front of' which it stood ?" In the present state of our knolwedge about Sārnāth it is impossible to answer these objections. It may be hoped that future excavations will throw light on the problem.

The column was exposed by Mr. Oertel in 1904-05. The capital and the broken pieces of the shaft were found lying on the concrete terrace around the Main Shrine between the stump *in situ*, and the western chapel. It follows, therefore, that the column was overthrown about the 10th, 11th, or 12th century A.D. That this ruthless act was perpetrated by a determined iconoclast is shown by the fact that the column was destroyed right down to the floor which surrounded it at that time. The lower seven lines of the Aśoka edict escaped this fate because they were then not visible.



APPENDIX VI

From Benjamin Rowland's book '*The Art and Architecture of India*, 1959, p. 41-42.

An example of the persistence of Indian symbolism even in modern times is a curious detail of the magical ceremonies attending the investiture of the nineteenth-century monarch of Siam, King Chulalongkorn. On the four sides of an artificial mountain erected in the capital for the occasion there were installed about a font the effigies of four beasts—the lion, the elephant, the bull, and the horse—in other words, the same group that parade around the plinth of the Sārnāth capital. During the ceremony the Prince received a baptism from these four gargoyles. This was no more nor less than a piece of magic for the investiture of a sovereign going back to the beginnings of Indian metaphysics and cosmology. It is an illustration of the principle of *pratibimba*, the reconstruction in architecture or sculpture of the imagined structure of supernatural things or regions, in order that men may have access to them or power over them through an imminent symbol. The artificial hill in Bangkok was the world mountain Meru, according to ancient cosmology, towering like a pillar between earth and heaven ; the four beasts stood for the four quarters and the four rivers of the world, so that the whole structure was a kind of replica of the world system.[1] In Bangkok, the Prince's circumambulation of this fanciful stage-set was designed magically to ensure his dominion over the universe reproduced there in a microcosm. The merry-go-round of the four animals at Sārnāth is simply an earlier example of the same principle in operation. Various early legends identify these creatures with the four great rivers that flow from the four openings of a magic lake situated at the world's navel in the Himālayas.[2]

One of the legends concerned with the magic lake, called variously Udaya or Anavatapta, relates that from the waters of this pool there rises a great shaft that uplifts a throne to uphold the sun at noon and then sinks again with setting

[1] The four beasts of the Evangelists and four seasonal animals of China are only variants of this geomantic symbolism. The Siamese ceremony is described in Margaret London, *Anna and the King of Siam* (New York, 1944), 299ff.

[2] We find them again as gargoyles attached to a tank at Néak Péan in the ancient Khmer capital of Angkor ; here, they were associated with the workship of Lakeśvara, the merciful Bodhisattva, who causes the water of the sacred lake to flow downward for the relief of souls in hell. In Ceylon..............

of the orb. The application of this rather elaborate symbolism to the Sārnāth column is not difficult to explain or understand : the shaft of the column is an emblem of the world axis, rising between heaven and earth, surrounded by the attributes of the four directions ; at its summit is a lion throne which, again following the legend, upholds the great wheel or solar disk. The lesser disks on the plinth enter into the iconography, too : originally these wheels had a precious stone, different for each, inlaid in the hub. This is another part of the magic directional symbolism of western Asiatic origin, since in ancient Mesopotamia different colours and jewels were associated with the quarters, and so, too, were different planets ; presumably the lesser disks that are replicas of the great wheel represented the four great planets that were in their ascendant, in conjunction with the Sun, at the four equinoxes of the year, suggesting thereby the position of the sun at the four seasons of the year. In other words, it appears that the Sārnāth pillar was a time-and-space symbol, typifying the sun's yearly round through the heavens, and with the concept of the axis and the four directions, including the whole structure of the universe. This cosmology is, of course, pre-Buddhist, and like so many other early myths and metaphysical ideas that accrued to Buddhism, has been assimilated as an appropriate emblem of the universal dominion of the Buddha's Law. This emblem could be taken as a partial proof of the pre-Aśokan origin of the whole pillar. The Buddha's turning of the Wheel of the Law is anagogically a turning of the solar wheel controlling the sun in its diurnal path through the skies. The turning of the Wheel is one of the powers inherent in the early Indian concept of the universal ruler or Chakravartin assumed by the Buddha ; the Sārnāth column may be interpreted, therefore, not only as a glorification of the Buddha's preaching, symbolised by the crowning wheel, but also, through the cosmological implications of the whole pillar, as a symbol of the universal extension of the power of the Buddha's Law, as typified by the sun that dominates all space and all time, and simultaneously an emblem of the universal extension of Maurya imperialism through the Dharma. The whole structure is, then, a translation of age-old Indian and Asiatic cosmology into artistic terms of essentially foreign origin, and dedicated, like all Aśoka's monuments, to the glory of Buddhism and the royal house.

APPENDIX VII

The Symbolism of the Sarnath pillar

By Jean Przyluski

According to Buddhist tradtion, there is in the centre of the earth, in the Himālaya region, a lake, whose water flows away in the four directions. This lake, called Anavatapta in Sanskrit, Anotatta in Pali, is surrounded by four rocks, which correspond to the quarters of space and have the shape of animal heads; the water is flowing off though the mouths of these animals. To the East of the lake, a clear stream flows out of a lion's head; to the South, a white stream is flowing out of an ox-head; to the West, a green stream flows out of a horse-head; to the North, a yellow stream is flowing from an elephant's head.[1] We recognise here the four great streams of Indian geogrophy: Sītā, Ganges, Īndus and Oxus.[2]

The essential characteristic of this cosmology is the correspondence of a space-quarter [cardinal point], a stream, a colour and a symbolic animal.

In Ceylon, sculptured stones are found in the shape of a half-moon, which archaeologists call "moonstones" and which often show the four symbolic animals. Already in 1896 M. Bell[3] noted that the four animals, shown on these "moonstones" were the same as those of the mythical lake Anavatapta. Further, Messrs Bell and Wickremasinghe found in Vijayārāma images of the same animals, which were buried at the four cardinal points: the elephant to the East, the horse to the South, the ox to the West, the lion to the North.[4] The same animals can still be seen on the top of some pilasters in Anurādhapura. M. Hocart, who refers to them in the *Ceylon Journal of Science*, notes that already in the 10th century, their orientation had become somewhat uncertain.[5] It is common knowledge that the lion-pillar of the Sarnath museum has also the four symbolic animals. With Mr. Hocart, one may suggest that the same tradition which is already found on the monument of Sarnath, had lasted till the

[1] Hardy, *Mannual of Buddhism*, p. 16.

[2] Kirfel, *Die Kosmographie der Inder*, p. 109 and 175

[3] *Arch. Survey Ceylon*, 1896 p. 16.

[4] Hocart, *Ceylon Journal of Science*, vol. II, part 1, p. 13.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 13.

building of the Anurādhapura pilasters. I would like to point out the meaning of this tradition, by a study of the symbolism of the pillar of Sarnath in the light of the documents and the texts.

The description of this pillar in the Catalogue of the Archaeological Museum of Sarnath (Pl. LIX) is as follows : [*See Appendix V b*].

At fist sight, one is tempted to regard this pillar as a Buddhist monument and to try to interpret it as such. Thus Mr. Foucher wrote recently : "On this oldest master-piece of Indian sculpture, you see already depicted—separated by four other wheels of the Law,—an elephant, a bull, a horse and a lion. Apparently, we have to regard them respectively as the elephant of the Conception ; the constellation of the Bull, supposed to have been that of his Birth; the horse of the "Great Departure" ; and finally the lion, epithet of Śākya-muni, also called Śākya-siṁha, "the lion among the Śākyas". At any rate, we should no longer be surprised to see these four animals appear again and again on sculptures, and always according to the ancient custom, with a lotus halo. Sometimes they are drawn according from nature, sometimes the sculptor gives them wings in Persian fashion : for he has to fill many medallions and when he has a certain theme, he does not give it up before he has exhausted all its possible variations.[1]

We on our part do not see any reason why the sculptors should have indiscriminately brought together a symbolic elephant, the image of a constellation and the horse of the "Great Departure", or why "the lion of the Śākyas" should be shown at the side of these animals as well as above the capital. And if the great wheel as well as the four others, is the Wheel of the Law, why do the smaller images have only twenty-four spokes, whereas the wheel on top had probably thirty-two of them ? For all these questions, the method of Buddhist interpretation has no answer.

In fact, nothing proves that the pillars so-called "of Aśoka", have been built by this king and that they are inspired by Buddhism. No doubt, most of these pillars bear inscriptions of Aśoka, but this king could well have written his edicts on monoliths, erected a long time before his reign.[2] In the 7th Pillar edict, Aśoka first declares that he has raised *dhamma-thambāni*, only "*Stambhas* of the Law", he then orders the edict to be engraved wherever stone pillars be

[1] *Etude sur l' Art Bouddhique de l' Inde*, Maison Franco-Japonaise, p. 33.

[2] *Monahan* already noted this. *The Early History of Bengal*, p. 227.

found. Consequently such pillars existed before him, and he wanted no doubt to put an end to their ancient meaning by changing their purport. Aśoka introduces a new type of universal kingship. That is why he renews the monuments of earlier Chakravartins. His kingship is based on the *dharma*. He therefore transforms the ancient monoliths and makes *dhamma-thambāni* of them.

In order to understand the meaning of the Sarnath monument, we must compare it to the great cosmic pillar, of which it is only the reduced image. Among the numerous allusions to this mythical pillar, which are scattered in Indian literature, one of the most precise is found in the 18th story of the "*Thirty-two Tales of the Throne*":

"On top of mount Udaya is the altar of a divinity, in front of which is a lake that has never been seen and in which one descends on the four sides by golden and glittering staircases, adorned with precious stones, pearls and coral.[1] In the centre of this lake is a golden column and on this column, is a throne also golden, in which different jewels are set. From sunrise to noon, the column with the throne rises gradually, till it touches the sun-disc ; from noon to sunset, the column sinks gradually down, till it stands in the centre of the lake as before. The same thing happens everyday.[2]

The mythical column mentioned in this story is not altogether different from the monument under study:

1. The pillar of Sarnath, as so many other columns of the same type, whose images decorate the *Stūpas*, was surmounted by a wheel with thirty-two spokes. The "*Thirty-two Tales of the Throne*"[3] tell us that the top of the golden column touches the sun-disc at noon. The wheel which surmounted the Sarnath pillar was no doubt intended to depict this conjunction.

2. The golden column is surmounted by a throne. Below the solar Wheel, the pillar of Sarnath shows a group of four lions, which support the Wheel and thus serve as a throne for the sacred image of the Sun-god. The throne made with lions is a very ancient element in Indian culture.[4]

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[1] We may suggest that here the text has been tampered with and that the original redaction distinguished four staircases, decorated with four different *ratnas*'.

[2] Translation Ferr, p. 127-28.

[3] Note the repetition of the number 32.

[4] Cf. *siṁhāsana*=throne. For images of this type in India and the cultures of the Near-East cf. Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l' Art*, V, p. 713.

3. In Indian art, the lotus is often used as support or pedestal of a deity. Its flower floats on the water-surface and opens up according to the intensity of light. The 18th of the "*Thirty-two Tales of the Throne*" suggests the vision of a gigantic lotus-stalk, which would rise from the mythical lake to allow the Sun to sit on it at noon. The pillar of Sarnath, surmounted with the solar disc, is precisely adorned with a lotus-flower opened as wide as possible, as its petals are turned over and hang down[1].

After the similarities, which we have noted just now, the presence of the same symbolic animals in the Anavatapta lake and on the Sarnath pillar cannot be due to mere coincidence, for, the Anavatapta lake, out of which these four great streams are flowing, is in the centre of the earth. The golden column which stands aloft in the centre of Udaya lake in the "*Thirty-two Tales of the Throne*", is none other but the cosmic axle. Udaya and Anavatapta hence are two names of the same mystical tank, as the Sarnath pillar is the image on a smaller scale of the golden column and hence of the world axle, it is no wonder to find the four symbolic animals of the Anavatapta lake depicted on it. In the description of this tank, each quarter of space is linked to one of the four animals. One must accept the same relationship in the decoration of Sarnath. Before attempting a detailed examination of this question, we shall see that the cosmological symbolism allows for an explanation of still other ornamentations of the Sarnath pillar.

In Babylonian astrology, below the great triad: Sun, Moon, Venus, we find a group of four planets, each one of which is related to one of the cardinal points and to a special colour: Mercurius, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn.[2] On Babylonian monuments these four planets are represented by rosettes, all of the same kind. At Sarnath we see four small wheels in between the symbolic animals. These wheels can represent the four secondary planets, for they have but twenty-four spokes, while the great solar wheel had, no doubt, thirty-two of them. Further, we know that in Babylon, a precious metal corresponded to each planet.[3] At Sarnath, each small wheel had a hub of precious stone.

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[1] On this strange flower of Persepolitan style see La Vallée Poussin, *L'Inde au temps des Mauryas*, p. 161; which refers to the work of G. Combaz, *L' Inde et l' Asie occidentale*, not yet published.

[2] Jeremias, *Handbuch*, p. 175.

[3] *La ville du Cakravartin, influences babyloniennes sur la civilisation de l' Inde* (The town of the Chakravartin, Babylonian influences on Indian civilisation), *Rocznik Orjentalistyczny*, V, p. 165-85.

The symbolism of the Sarnath pillar is therefore explained by a cosmology, one essential characteristic of which is the correspondence of a point of the compass, a stream, a colour, a planet, a precious metal and a symbolic animal. I have already pointed to traces of similar conceptions in the traditions regarding the town of Chakravartin and I have shown that we must, no doubt, look for its origin in the Babylonian culture. At Sarnath, everything prompts us to look to the West: the cosmic axle, the lions, the capital and the wheels.

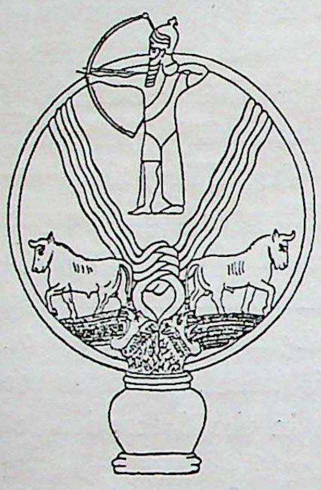


Fig. 1

In a kind of Assyrian standard[1] a vase is to be seen surmounted by a disc, supported by two heads set on the one neck, of a monster, which has a lion's profile and a horn in the middle of the forehead (fig. 1).

In some Egyptian capitals lion's heads are found in between the abacus and the lotus-flower, which surmounts the shaft of the column (fig. 2)[2].

The Sarnath pillar is composed with these very same elements. The transmission of this type from Egypt to India via Persia, could be easily explained, if we take into account the well known influence of Egyptian on Persian art. Both Egypt and North-West India have been parts of the Achaemenid Empire.

This explanation has to meet two objections: (1) Why is the capital of the Sarnath type not found in Iran? (2) Why is it found in India only in monuments contemporaneous with Aśoka, only at a relatively recent date?

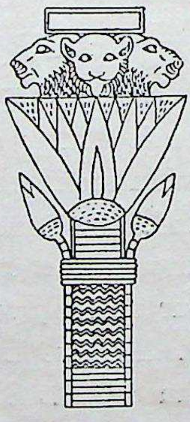


Fig. 2

The second objection is ruled out, if one remembers what has been said previously: the Sarnath-pillar may be of a date much earlier than Aśoka. Nothing prevents us to place it in the Achaemenid period, on the contrary everything prompts us to do so; the most characteristic feature of the architecture of the Achaemenids, is a group of quadrupeds arranged back to back on the capital of the column. True, at Persepolis the quadrupeds are unicorn bulls. But this stone-architecture has succeeded an architecture of wood, of which nothing remains.

[1] Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l' Art*, V, fig. 321.

[2] *Ibid.*, fig. 323.

The oldest known columns are not of earlier date than Darius' reign. If the type of the lion-pillar is very archaic, its dispartition in Iran can be explained.

Perrot and Chipiez[1] have ventured the hypothesis that after having raised the column on the back of quadrupeds, one would have fancied the idea of putting these animals on top. Now, some Achaemenid columns are in fact resting on lions. Hence we are led to surmise the existence of lion-capitals, originally made of wood, and which the Sarnath monument translates into stone.

In short, we suggest that a same type of column was spread from Egypt to India, only from one end to the other of the Achaemenid empire. Later, perhaps under Assyrian influence, the lion is changed into a hybrid and unicorn monster, but he always keeps his leonine features; the Assyrian standard, just mentioned, shows a monster with a lion face, and a horn in the middle of the forehead; the quadrupeds put back to back on the capitals of Persepolis, are bulls or grifons with lion paws and also a horn in the middle of the forehead. Finally the lotus reappears everywhere: in Egypt, in Persepolis and in Sarnath.

Provisionally in order to arrange the ideas we can conceive the evolution of the column to have taken place as follows:

Egypt	Persia before Darius (?)	India before Aśoka
Lions back to back	Lions back to back	Lions back to back
	Persia after Darius	
Lotus	Bulls back to back	Lotus
Shaft	Lotus, Shaft	Shaft

In this hypothesis, the lion pillar of Sarnath would be an Indian survival of an Achaemenid type, which has disappeared in Iran. Moreover, the motif of squatting lions, surmounted by a solar disc, can be traced in the palaces of the Achaemenids. The excavations at Susa have brought it to light, not, it is true, on a column but in polychrom glazed brick-panels (Pl. *LV*). Mr. R. de Mecquenem writes in this rgard: About 1910 we have found in the North-East corner of the central courtyard of the palace, the fragments of three winged globes and of three pairs of winged lions with human head. Pézard has afterward proved that the winged globe had to surmount the lions so as to form but a single panel. The winged globe, solar symbol, is an Egyptian motif; it depicts Lower Egypt as the Horus symbolises Higher Egypt. The Assyrians have adopted it for their bas-reliefs and the Achaemenids have borrowed it from

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 507.

the Assyrians. The sun for the Zoroastrians is the eye of Ormuz, she dominates here the squatting lions. On the post-stamps, the monuments, the imperial standard of modern Persia we still see today the sun rising over a lion, passing by [with drawn sword][1].

Let us come back to the four symbolic animals at Sarnath. I have already pointed out that, in the Buddhist descriptions of the Anavatapta lake, each quarter of space is related to a stream, an animal, a colour, a precious stone.

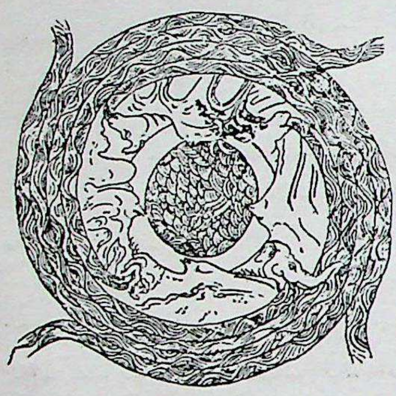


Fig. 3

A Cambodian writing, the *Trai p'um,* contains a picture of the Anotatta lake, in conformity to the traditional representations.[2] The lake, surrounded by mountains, is the dwelling place of a *Nāgarāja.* On its shores are four rocks, sculptured in the shape of animal heads; we can draw up the following table of corresponding things:

East	lion head	clear water
South	ox ,,	white ,,
West	horse ,,	green ,,
North	elephant ,,	yellow ,,

The Chinese pilgrim Hiuan-tsang expresses similar conceptions when he writes with regard to the hot springs he saw near Rājagṛiha. "To the West of the Northern gate of the town surrounded by mountains (Kuśāgārapura), rises mount Pi-pou-la (Vipula). Here is what the people of that country have to tell about it: "To the North of the South-West slopes of this mountain, there were once upon a time five hundred hot springs; now there remains of them only a few dozens: but some are cold, others tepid, none is altogether warm. These springs come, south of the great snow mountains from the lake Anavatapta, which flows beneath the earth till this spot. The water of these springs is nice and pure and its taste is that of the lake out of which it flows. In its course it flows along five hundred little burning hells (*sic*). These violent underground fires raise flames which thus heat the water. At all the openings, through which the water of these springs flows away, sculptured stones have been put. On some of them heads of lions or white elephants are sculptured, elsewhere hanging gutters of stone have been made, which serve as water-conduits. Below stone

[1] *Les derniers résultats des fouilles de Suse* (The last results of the excavations at Susa), *Revue des Arts Asiatiques*, VI, p. 81.

[2] Cf. Gerini, *Chuḷakantamaṅgala*, Bangkok, 1893, p. 102 and follow, and A.Grünwedel, *Buddhistische Studien*, p. 107.

basins have been constructed. From all countries people come here to bathe. Many persons suffering from chronic diseases afterwards return cured"[1].

We note, that in the picture of the Cambodian *Trai p'um*, the four animals are found in the following order :

lion, ox, horse, elephant,

whereas on the Sarnath pillar the same animals appear in a quite different order :

elephant, ox, horse, lion.

An explanation, which first comes to the mind, is this : it is possible that the ancient Indian tradition may later on have undergone changes in Cambodia. This hypothesis becomes very probable in the light of the testimony of the *Abhidharma-vibhāṣā*. An excerpt of this work, preserved in the *King liu yi siang*[2] enumerates the streams, animals and corresponding *ratnas* in the following order :

The Ganges flows out of the golden elephant;
The Indus flows out of the silver ox,
The Oxus flows out of the horse of *lieou-li* (*vaiḍūrya*),
The Sītā flows out of the crystal lion.

The *Abhidharma-vibhāṣā*, whence the Chinese compilator of the *King liu yi siang* has drawn these general indications completes the description, by enumerating for each of the four great streams four secondary rivers[3]. The Chinese original [*sic*] has been translated twice in Chinese, first by Buddhavarman in 437-439, afterwards by Hiuan-tsang in 656-659. We thus go back to the 5th century. At this period the tradition has not yet been tampered with : the order of the four symbolic animals is the same as that on the Sarnath pillar.

We can still go higher. Dr. Sylvain Lévi, who has compared the Digvarṇana of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in its so called Bengali recension (G) with the *Mañjarī* of Kṣemendra (Km.), notes that the poem (G. 44, 60 ; Km. 276-277) describes on mount Mandara, the pool Ghṛitamaṇḍoda, where the Ganges falls from heaven and where she flows away in four branches : Gaṅgā proper, Śatadru, Kauśikī and Vaitaraṇī," and he adds : "We have here evidently before us a Brāhmanic parallel to the Buddhist Anavatapta, with its four great streams.[4]"

[1] *Mémories de Hiouen-Tshang*. trad. Stan. Julien, II, p. 23.

[2] Cf. Trip. Tok, XXXVI, 2, p. 77a. The *King liu yi siang* is a Buddhist encyclopedia in Chinese, dated from 516.

[3] Trip. Tok. XXI, 7, p. 14 a and XXII 1, p. 23 b.

[4] *Pour l' historire du Rāmāyaṇa, Journ. As.*, 1918, I. p. 152.

In short, from ancient till modern times Indian cosmology has presented some essential characteristics; in the centre of the world there is a tank, whose waters flow towards the four points of the compass and each direction or stream is depicted by a symbolic animal; in the centre of the tank the cosmic axle stands aloft, a golden pillar and column of water, which links the vault of heaven to the earth and supports the sun[1]. However, at a relatively recent period, this cosmology undergoes changes, whose importance we have still to gauge, and whose causes we have to point out, if possible.

In Cambodia, East of the Práḥ Khan, ruins have been discovered of a monument, unique in its genre, the Nak Pan. This name means "the encoiled *nāgas*" because an island, girded by the coils of two *nāgas*, emerges from the centre of a tank. This great square tank is set in between four others, of smaller size. The central island forms a round understructure, cut with steps, which supports a small sanctuary. "The second step from the ground level is, over its whole length cut in the shape of lotus-petals, so that the small sanctuary must have appeared to rest, when the tank was filled, on a gigantic flower, floating on the water[2]."

The central water-tank communicates with the secondary tanks, through four stone conduits, out of which the water flows through a spout in the shape of a sculptured head. These spouts show in the South, a lion's head, in the East, a human head, in the North, an elephant's head, in the West, a horse's head.[3]

Messrs Finot and Goloubev have recognised in this monument the picture of the Anavatapta lake[4] and of the four streams, which flow from it on the four sides. It is true, that in the descriptions of the mythical lake, the four great streams come out of the heads of lion, elephant, horse and ox, whereas at Nak Pan, a human head replaces that of an ox. "Nevertheless, Finot and Goloubev note, the parallel is too striking to be due to mere chance and the existence of an optional variation is not improbable. One could imagine, for instance, that in the series: ox, lion, elephant, horse, the first image has been replaced by a

[1] On beliefs regarding this support of the sun, cf. *Deux noms indiens du dieu Soleil* (Two Indian names of the Sun-god), article which appeared in the volume of Mélange in honour of Professor Rapson.

[2] L. de Lajonquiére, *Inventaire descriptif des monuments du Cambodge*, III. p. 165.

[3] Cf. Marchal, *Notes sur l'architecture de Nak pan*, BEFEO, XXVI, p. 6 and pl. VIII.

[4] *Le Symbolisme de Nak pan*, BEFEO, XXIII, p. 401-405.

Bodhisattva head, while the other three have been taken to allude to his surname of Śākya-siṁha, Lion of the Śākyas", to his conception in the shape of a white elephant and to his departure on the horse Kanthaka[1]".

It is difficult to accept that the sculptured spout of one of the outlets depicts the Bodhisattva, and it is not clear by which association of ideas, this person took the place of the ox, which presided over one of the quarters of space. Nor does one understand why in a monument, which depicts the lake Anavatapta, the animals of the other quarters should have lost their traditional meaning and should have become the elephant of the conception or the horse Kanthaka. We must look for an explanation which takes us not so far away from the cosmological theories and which takes the spatial representations more seriously. The myth of the Anavatapta lake and of the four streams presupposes a division of space in four parts. The theory of the four kings is founded on a similar basis. The two tetrads could have influenced one another. Let us examine this suggestion more closely.

In 1923, Mr. P. Pelliot had written a thorough study on "*The Theory of the Four Sons of Heaven*" from which I have now the translation of the oldest texts[2]. In the Introduction of his "*Memoirs of the Western Countries*", Hiuan-tsang first speaks of the four continents and of the four great streams, which flow out of the Anavatapta lake : he goes on as follows ; "as the (actual) age has no "king with the wheel" (*Chakravartin*), corresponding to the cosmic order, there are four kings on the territory of the Tchan-pou (Jambudvīpa) continent. To the South (is) the "lord of the elephants" ; (his country) is hot and humid, and suitable for elephants. To the West (is) the "lord of the jewels" ;(his country) is close to the sea and has jewels in abundance. To the North (is) the "lord of the horses"; (his country) is cold and rough and suitable for horses. To the East (is) the "lord of men" ; (his country) is of moderate climate and pleasant and there is a numerous population[3]".

The biography of Tche-mong in the *Kao seng tchouan* (chapt. III ; *Trip.* éd. Tok. XXXV, 2, p. 17) alludes to similar ideas[4].

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[2] *T'oung Pao*, 1923, p. 97-125.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 106.

[4] Chavannes, *Voyage de Song Yun dans l'Udyāna et le Gandhāra* (Journey of Song Yun in Udyāna and Gandhāra), BEFEO, 1903, p. 54 of reprint.

The following passage is found at the end of the *Che eul yeou king*, a writing which summarises the biography of Śākyamuni and which must have been translated into Chinese in 392 by a monk of the "Western countries" called Kālodaka ; "In the Yen-feou-t'i (Jambudvīpa) there are sixteen great kingdoms with 84,000 walled cities : there are eight kings (*kouo-wang*) and four sons of Heaven (*t'ien-tseu*). To the East is the son of Heaven of the Tsin (=China) ; people there are prosperous. In the south, is the son of Heaven of the kingdom of T'ien-tchou (India); the land there produces many famous elephants. To the west is the Son of Heaven of the kingdom of Ta-ts' in (Mediterranean East) ; the land produces gold, silver, jewels, jade in abundance. To the North-West is the son of Heaven of the Yue-tche (Indo-Scythians) ; the land there produces many excellent horses[1]".

About 245-250 the Chinese sent to Fou-nan two ambassadors K'ang T'ai and Tchou Ying, who returned with precious information. The story of their journey is almost entirely lost ; in one of the books which have preserved some of its fragments, the following passage is to be found : "According to the account of the foreign countries of K'ang T'ai, in foreign countries it is said that there are three things in abundance under the sky : abundance of men in China, abundance of jewels in Ta-ts'in, abundance of horses among the Yue-tche[2]".

Mr. Pelliot concludes : "The Buddhist tradition, known in China through the *Che eul yeou king* and through Hiuan-tsang, heard by Arab travellers in the 9th century and which survives under a very different form in the traditions of modern India, was already current in the south-seas when K'ang T'ai visited Fou-nan in the middle of the 3rd century.[3]"

To the Chinese and Muslim testimonies, already quoted we may add an Indian text which does not lead us back to a very ancient period, but is nonetheless very instructive. We read in the *Kathāsaritsāgara* (ed. of Bombay VII, 4 p. 200) :

विक्रमादित्य इत्यासीद् राजा पाटलिपुत्रके ॥
तस्याभूतमभिप्रेते मित्रे हयपतिर्नृपः ।
राजा गजपतिश्चोभौ बह्वश्वगजसाधनौ ॥
शत्रुर्नरपतिर्भूरिपादास्तस्य चाभवत् ।
मानिनो नरसिंहाख्यः प्रतिष्ठानेश्वरो बली ॥

[1] *T'sung Pao, ibid.*, p. 98.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

We have here four kings, the first of whom is called by his name Vikramāditya, whereas the next two Hayapati and Gajapati are only called by their title. and the last one has a name, Narasiṁha, as well as a title, Narapati[1].

These three titles have already been pointed out in the *Mahāvyutpatti*, 186, in modern Indian traditions and on playing cards[2]. They are clearly explained in our text by the abundance of horses, elephants and soldiers in the three corresponding kingdoms. Though for four kings, the story of the *Kathāsaritsāgara* gives only three titles and two proper names, we may be allowed to suggest, that in the primitive legend each of the kings had, as the last one, a name and a title. This leads us to reconstruct a fourth title : Ratnapati "master of the jewels", in conformity to the traditions put down in the *Che eul yeou king* and in the stories of the Chinese pilgrims. Ratnapati has been left out, probably because the title refers to forgotten ideas. Only those titles have been kept which remind one of the four Indian army divisions, for *hayapati*, *gajapati* and *narapati* could mean respectively head of the cavalry, of the elephants and the infantry.

This example is useful as it makes us aware of the interaction of the two tetrads, of which the better known one tends to replace the one which is less usual. This substitution was particularly easy where the two series had several elements in common. This was the case of the military titles compared to those of the four kings :

Four heads of army divisions	head of horses head of chariots	head of elephant head of men
Four kings	head of horses head of treasures	head of elephants head of men.

The chances for contamination were as high between the series of the four symbolical animals and the series of the four kings ; the two series had the horse and the elephant in common and both were applied to the quarters of space. One understands, that, under these conditions, the man, attribute of one of the kings, has been able to replace one of the symbolic animals. The series of Nak Pan appears to be the result of a contamination between the Sarnath tetrad and the one of the kings, as the following table shows[3] :

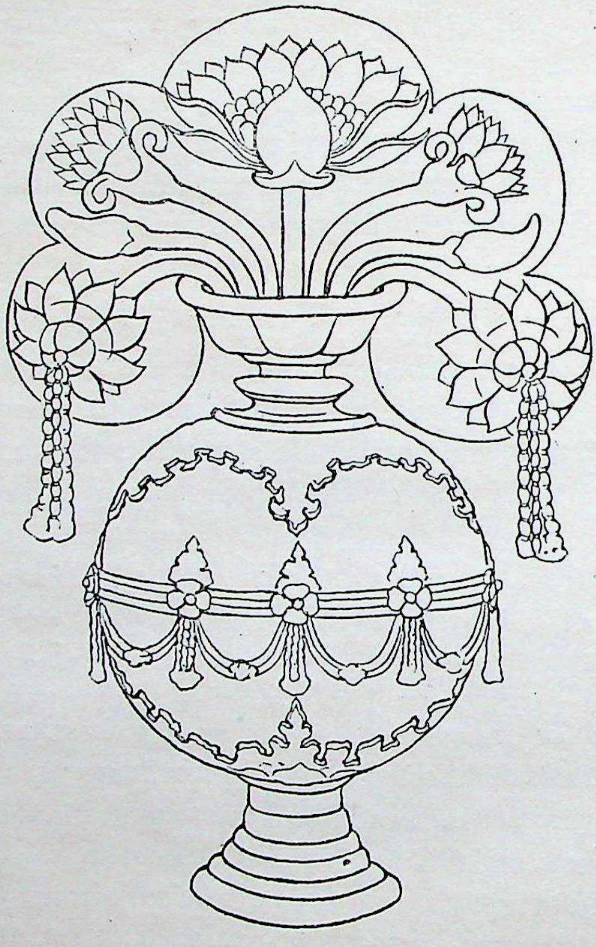
Sarnath	lion	horse	ox	elephant
Nak Pan	lion	horse	man	elephant
Four kings	treasures	horse	man	elephant

[1] In the translation of this passage by Tawney Narapati has been left out.

[2] Pelliot, *ibid.*, p. 111 to 115.

[3] To bring out the relationship of the three series, I propose their elements in an arbitrary order, independently of the orientation.

A last remark will make this explanation more probable : in the series of the four kings, the ruler of men rules in the East ; in Nak Pan the spout sculptured in the shape of a human head stands precisely in the East.[1]



[1] Translated by Father Joseph van Troy S. J. from the original French paper of Jean Przyluski, entitled "Le Symbolisme du Pilier de Sarnath" in *Linossier,* II, p. 481-498 Paris, 1932.

APPENDIX VIII

Text of the Resolution moved by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru about the National Flag and passed by the Constituent Assembly of India on 22nd July, 1947.

"Resolved that the National Flag of India shall be a horizontal tricolour of deep saffron (Kesari), white and dark green in equal proportion. In the centre of the white band, there shall be a wheel in navy blue to represent the Charkha. The design of the wheel shall be that of the wheel (Chakra) which appears on the Sarnath Lion Capital of Aśoka."

"The diameter of the wheel shall approximate to the width of the white band. The ratio of the width to the length of the Flag shall ordinarily be 2:3."

Speech delivered by Pandit Nehru on the occasion:

This Resolution, Sir, is in simple language, in a slightly technical language, and there is no glow or warmth in the words that I have read. Yet I am sure that many in this House will feel that glow and warmth which I feel at the present moment for behind this resolution and the flag which I have the honour to present to this House for adoption lies history, the concentrated history of short span in a nation's existence. Nevertheless, sometimes in a brief period we pass through the track of centuries. It is not so much the mere act of living that counts but what one does in this brief life that is ours; it is not so much the mere existence of a nation that counts but what the nation does during the various periods of her existence; and I do venture to claim that in the past quarter of a century or so India has lived and acted in a concentrated way and the emotions which have filled the people of India represent not merely a brief spell of years but something infinitely more. They have gone down into history and tradition and have added themselves on to that vast history and tradition which is our heritage in this country. So, when I move this resolution, I think of this concentrated history through which all of us have passed during the last quarter of a century. Memories crowd in upon me. I remember the ups and downs of the great struggle for freedom of this great nation. I remember, and many in this House will remember how we looked up to this Flag not only with pride and enthusiasm but with a tingling in our veins; also how, when we were sometimes down and out, then again the sight of this flag gave us courage to go on. Then, many who are not present here today, many of our comrades who have passed, held on to the flag, some amongst them even unto death, and handed it over as they sank, to others to hold it aloft. So, in this simple form of words, there is much more than will be clear on the surface. There is the struggle of the people for freedom with all its ups and downs and trials and disasters, and there is finally today as I move this Resolution, a certain triumph about it—a measure of triumph in the conclusion of that struggle.

Now, I realise fully, as this House must realise, that this triumph of ours has been marred in many ways. There have been especially in the past few months, many happenings which cause us

sorrow, which has gripped our hearts. We have seen parts of this dear Motherland of ours cut off from the rest. We have seen large numbers of people suffering tremendously, large numbers wandering like waifs and strays, without a home. We have seen many other things which I need not repeat to this House, but which we cannot forget. All this sorrow has dogged our footsteps. Even when we have achieved victory and triumph, it still dogs us and we have tremendous problems to face in the present and in the future. Nevertheless it is true I think—I hold it to be true—that this moment does represent a triumph and a victorious conclusion of all our struggles, for the moment.

There has been a very great deal of bewailing and moaning about various things that have happened. I am sad, all of us are sad at heart because of those things. But let us distinguish that from the other fact of triumph, because there is triumph in victory, in what has happened. It is no small thing that great and mighty empire which has represented imperialist domination in this country has decided to end its days here. That was the objective we aimed at.

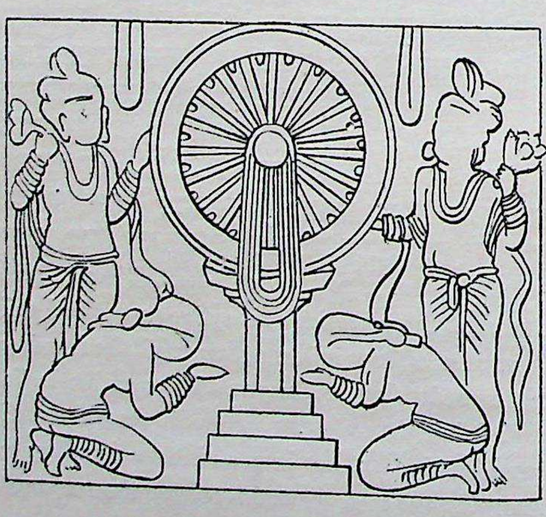
So I present this Flag to you. This Resolution defines the Flag which I trust you will adopt. In a sense this Flag is adopted, not by a formal resolution, but by popular acclaim and usage, adopted much more by the sacrifice that surrounded it in the past few decades. We are in a sense only ratifying that popular adoption. It is a Flag which has been variously described. Some people, having misunderstood its significance, have thought of it in communal terms and believe that some part of it represents this community or that. BUT I MAY SAY THAT WHEN THIS FLAG WAS DEVISED THERE WAS NO COMMUNAL SIGNIFICANCE ATTACHED TO IT. WE THOUGHT OF A DESIGN FOR A FLAG WHICH WAS BEAUTIFUL TO LOOK AT. WE THOUGHT OF A FLAG WHICH WOULD IN ITS COMBINATION AND IN ITS SEPARATE PARTS WOULD SOMEHOW REPRESENT THE SPIRIT OF THE NATION, THE TRADITION OF THE NATION, THAT MIXED SPIRIT AND TRADITION WHICH HAS GROWN UP THROUGH THOUSANDS OF YEARS IN INDIA. SO WE DEVISED THIS FLAG. PERHAPS I AM PARTIAL BUT I DO THINK THAT IT IS A VERY BEAUTIFUL FLAG TO LOOK AT PURELY FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ARTISTRY, AND IT HAS COME TO SYMBOLISE MANY OTHER BEAUTIFUL THINGS, THINGS OF THE SPIRIT, THINGS OF THE MIND, THAT GIVE VALUE TO THE INDIVIDUAL'S LIFE AND TO THE NATION'S LIFE, FOR A NATION DOES NOT LIVE MERELY BY MATERIAL THINGS, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE HIGHLY IMPORTANT. It is important that we should have the good things of the world, the material possessions of the world, that our people should have the necessaries of life. That is of the utmost importance. Nevertheless, a nation, especially a nation like India, with an immemorial past, lives by other things also, the things of the spirit. If India has not been associated with these ideals and things of the spirit during these thousands of years, what would India have been ? It has gone through a very great deal of misery and degradation in the past, but somehow even in the depths of degradation, the head of India has been held high, the thought of India has been high and the ideals of India has been high. So we have gone through these tremendous ages and we stand up today in proud thankfulness for our part and even more so for the future that is to come for which we are going to work. It is our privilege, of those assembled here, to mark this transition in a particular way, in a way that will be remembered.

I began by saying that it is my proud privilege to be ordered to move this Resolution . Now, Sir, may I say a few words about this particular flag ? It will be seen that there is a slight variation from the one many of us have used during the past years. The colours are the same, a deep saffron, a white and dark green. In the white previously there was the Charkha which symbolised the common man in India, which symbolised the masses of people, which symbolised their industry and which came to us from the message which Mahatma Gandhi delivered. Now, this particular Charkha symbol has been slightly varied in this Flag, not taken away at all. Why has this been varied ? Normally speaking, the symbol on one side of the Flag should be exactly the same as on the other side. Otherwise there is a difficulty which goes against the rules. Now the Charkha as it appeared previously on the Flag, had the Wheel on one side and the spindle on the other. If you see the other side of the Flag, spindle comes the other way ; if it does not do so, it is not proportionate, because the wheel must be towards the pole, not towards the end of the Flag. There was this practical difficulty. Therefore, after considerable thought, we were of course convinced that the great symbol which had enthused people should continue but that it should continue in a slightly different form ; that the wheel should be there, not the rest of the Charkha, i.e. the spindle and the string which created this confusion, that the essential part of the Charkha should be there, that is the Wheel. So the old traditions continue in regard to the Charkha and the Wheel. But what type of wheel should we have ? OUR MINDS WENT BACK TO MANY WHEELS BUT NOTABLY ONE FAMOUS WHEEL WHICH HAD APPEARED IN MANY PLACES AND WHICH ALL OF US HAVE SEEN, THE ONE AT THE TOP OF THE CAPITAL OF THE AŚOKAN COLUMN AND IN MANY OTHER PLACES. THAT WHEEL IS A SYMBOL OF INDIA'S ANCIENT CULTURE ; IT IS A SYMBOL OF THE MANY THINGS THAT INDIA HAD STOOD FOR THROUGH THE AGES. SO WE THOUGHT THAT THIS CHAKRA EMBLEM SHOULD BE THERE AND THAT WHEEL APPEARS. FOR MY PART I AM EXCEEDINGLY HAPPY THAT IN THIS SENSE INDIRECTLY WE HAVE ASSOCIATED WITH THIS FLAG OF OURS NOT ONLY THIS EMBLEM BUT IN A SENSE THE NAME OF AŚOKA, ONE OF THE MOST MAGNIFICENT NAMES NOT ONLY IN INDIA'S HISTORY BUT IN WORLD HISTORY. IT IS WELL THAT AT THIS MOMENT OF STRIFE, CONFLICT AND INTOLERANCE, OUR MINDS SHOULD GO BACK TOWARDS WHAT INDIA STOOD FOR, I HOPE AND BELIEVE, ESSENTIALLY THROUGHOUT THE AGES, INSPITE OF MISTAKES AND ERRORS AND DEGRADATIONS FROM TIME TO TIME. SIR, IF INDIA HAD NOT STOOD FOR SOMETHING VERY GREAT, I DO NOT THINK THAT INDIA COULD HAVE SURVIVED AND CARRIED ON ITS CULTURAL TARDITIONS IN A MORE OR LESS CONTINUOUS MANNER THROUG THESE VAST AGES. IT CARRIED ON ITS CULTU-RAL TRADITION, NOT UNCHANGING, NOT RIGID,BUT ALWAYS KEEPING ITS ESSENCE, ALWAYS ADAPTING ITSELF TO NEW DEVELOPMENTS, TO NEW INFLUENCES. That has been the Tradition of India, always to put out fresh blooms and flowers, always receptive to the good things that it received, sometimes receptive to the bad things also, but always true to her ancient culture. All manner of new influences through thousands of years have influenced us, while we influenced them tremendously also, for you will remember India has not been in the past a light little narrow country, disdaining other countries. India throughout the long ages of her history has been connected with other countries, but has been an international centre, sending out her people abroad to far off countries, carrying her message and receiving the message of other countries in ex-

change, but India was strong enough to remain embedded on the foundations on which she was built, although changes, many changes, have taken place. The strength of India, it has been said, consists in this strong foundation. It consists also in amazing capacity to receive, to adapt what it wants to adapt, not to reject because something is outside its scope, but to accept and receive everything. It is folly for any nation or race to think that it can only give to and not receive from the rest of the world. Once a nation or a race begins to think like that, it becomes rigid, it becomes ungrowing; it grows backwards and decays. In fact, if India's history can be traced, India's periods of decay are those when it closed herself up into a shell and refused to receive or to look at the outside world. India's greatest periods are those when she stretched her hands to others in far off countries, sent her emissaries and ambassadors, her trade agents and merchants to those countries, and received ambassadors and emissaries from abroad.

Now because I have mentioned the name of Aśoka, I should like you to think that the Aśokan period in Indian history was essentially an international period of Indian history. It was not a narrowly national period. It was a period when India's ambassadors went abroad to far countries and went abroad not in the way of an Empire and imperialism but as ambassadors of peace, and culture and goodwill.

THEREFORE, THIS FLAG THAT I HAVE THE HONOUR TO PRESENT TO YOU IS NOT, I HOPE AND TRUST, A FLAG OF EMPIRE, A FLAG OF IMPERIALISM, A FLAG OF DOMINATION OVER ANYBODY, BUT A FLAG OF FREEDOM NOT ONLY FOR OURSELVES, BUT A SYMBOL OF FREEDOM FOR ALL PEOPLE WHO MAY SEE IT. And wherever it may go—and I hope it will go far—not only where Indians dwell as our ambassadors and ministers but across the far seas where it may be carried by Indian ships, wherever it may go, it will bring a message of comradeship, a message that India wants to be friend with every country of the world and India wants to help any people who seek freedom. That hope will be the Message of this Flag everywhere.



SOME MORE REFERENCES TO THE FOUR ANIMALS SEE *ANTE* P. 63.

41. Aśokan Lion-capital from Udaigiri showing four animals on the abacus. Cunningham, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, pl. XXX; see fig. 100.
42. On Ring-stones from Patna ; see figs. 84, 98-9.
43. From Amaravati relief ; see fig. 86.
44. On a moon-stone, Nagarjunikonda ; see figs. 87, 101-4.
45. *Vāmana Purāṇa*, ch. 75. 18-22 ; see also my *Vāmana Purāṇa, A Study*, pp. 158-9.

    White Goddess—Sarasvatī—Sāttvika—Brahmā—Elephant (*Kuñjara*)—Brāhmaṇa.

    Red Goddess—Jaya-śrī—Rājasa—Devarāja and his son—Horse (*Vājī*)—Kshatriya.

    Yellow Goddess—Lakshmī—Tāmasa—Śakra—Chariot (*Ratha*)—Vaiśya.

    Black Goddess—Priyadevī—Triguṇātmaka—Dānava—Vidyādhara—Bull (*Vṛishabha*)—Śūdra.
46. On a stele, Ceylon, see fig. 96 and its description.
47. On an Ivory Box from Kapiśā (mod. Begram, Afganistan), four animals, viz., lion, elephant, horned lion and horse. Hackin, J., *Recherches Archéologiques A Begram* (1939), Vol. II, pl. LVIII. Vol. I (Text), pp. 87, 95-6 (Figs. 178-80).

DESCRIPTION OF PLATES

Fig. 1. Aśokan Lion-capital at Sārnāth. Mauryan period, 3rd cen. B.C.; see pp. 1-3; 73-77. The Chakra on the National Flag is the same as carved on the drum.

Fig. 2. Bull between two *Chakras* on the round drum of the Lion-capital; see p. 2. By courtsey of the Dir. Gen. of Archaeology.

Fig. 3. Lion between two *Chakras* on the round drum of the Lion-capital; see p. 2. By courtsey of the Dir. Gen. of Archaeology.

Fig. 4. Horse between two *Chakras* on the round drum of Sārnāth Capital; see p. 2. By courtsey of the same.

Fig. 5. Elephant between two *Chakras* on the round drum; see p. 2. By courtsey of the same.

Fig. 6. a. The big Dharma Chakra which topped the Lion-capital, having thirty-two spokes as reconstructed, on the basis of eight fragments.

Fig. 6. b. Line drawing of the Aśokan Pillar with its five component parts including the *Mahā-Dharma Chakra* as it was originally conceived.

Fig. 7. Line drawing of fragments of the rim of the *Mahā-Dharma Chakra* on the Lion-capital; see p. 2.

Fig. 8. Aśokan Lion Capital at Basārh-Bakhirā, Mauryan period.

Fig. 9. Aśokan Elephant Capital at Sankisa.

Fig. 10. Aśokan Bull Capital from Rampurva.

Fig. 11. Aśokan Lion Capital at Lauria Nandangarh.

Fig. 12. Aśokan Lion Capital from Rampurva.

Fig. 13. Aśokan Lion Capital at Sānchī; see p. 8.

Fig. 14. Lion Capital with *Chakra* on the top; Gupta period, Sānchī; see p. 10.

Fig. 15. Pillar with the figure of standing Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva on the top, Gupta period, Sānchī; see p. 10.

Fig. 16. Lion Capital from Udaigiri, now in the Gwalior Museum, Gupta period; see p. 11.

Figs. 17-18. Pottery from Kulli showing pillars with bulls secured to them.

Fig. 19a-20b. Indus Valley sealings showing the unicorn standing before the pillar. Circa 2500 B.C. The figures illustrate the association of animals with religious pillars, crowned with capitals.

Fig. 21. Chakra-dhvaja Pillar being worshipped; Bharhut Stūpa, 2nd cent. B.C.; see p. 13.

Figs.22-24. *Chakra*-topped pillars carved on the Gateways of the Sānchī Stūpa, being worshipped with garlands and banners; the pillars in figures 22 and 23 are installed in a railing; see pp. 11-12.

Figs.25-26. Worship of Chakra-dhvaja pillars as depicted on the Gateways of the Sānchī Stūpa; Fergusson, *Tree And Serpent Worship*, pl. 42.

Figs.27-29. Worship of Chakra-dhvaja carved on the Gateways of the Sānchī Stūpa, Marshall, *Monuments of Sanchi*, pl. 18, 27, 103. The presence of the deer on figs. 27 & 28 marks it out as the *Chakra*-topped pillars inspired by the Sārnāth model; these have been referred to on page 11-12 of the text, but those that have been described from Marshall are actually different from those which are illustrated, since the latter are more appropriate.

Fig. 30. Great Stūpa of Sānchī, showing *Chakra*-topped and Lion-topped pillars. Front face of the Eastern Gateway, Marshall, *ibid.*, pl. 39-40.

Figs.31-32. Chakra-dhvaja pillars on railing uprights at Sārnāth, Śuṅga period, showing how the various elements, specially the *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa*, was interpreted by the Śuṅga artists from the prototype of the Lion-capital; see pp. 25-26. By courtsey of the Dir. Gen. of Archaeology.

Fig. 33. Chakra-dhvaja pillars within railings from a relief at Amaravati.

Fig. 34. Chakra-dhvaja-topped pillar with shaft conceived in five portions with riders and phalanx on the two sides; from Amaravati.

Fig. 35. Lion on the top of a pillar having a full Vase (*Pūrṇa-ghaṭa*) as the base and top of the shaft; from Amaravati railing.

Fig. 36. Worship of the Chakra-dhvaja installed at the back of the throne of the Buddha at Sārnāth; from Amaravati.

Fig. 37. Chakra-dhvaja installed on the back of Buddha's throne. From Nagarjunikonda. By mistake written as Chūḍāmaha on printed plate.

Figs.38-39. Chakra-dhvaja on the top of animal Capitals; from Mathurā; early Kushāṇa period. Scene referred to as fig. 39 from the Mathurā Museum Catalogue is not included.

Fig. 40. Chakra-dhvaja installed in a shrine from a railing at Bodhgaya.

Fig. 63. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with overflowing lotuses, Sānchī; see p. 26.

Fig. 64. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with flowers and conventionalised foliage; Amaravati; see p. 26.

Fig. 65. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with a decorative basement, a girdle of flower garland and with overflowing lotuses on the top; see p. 26.

Fig. 66. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* from Kapiśā, Afganistan; see p. 26.

Fig. 67. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* from Mathurā; see p. 26.

Fig. 68. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with lotus scroll from Ceylon; see p. 26.

Fig. 69. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* decorated with a garland and lotuses, from Java; see p. 26.

Fig. 70. Four animals on a prism, Indus Valley; see p. 31.

Fig. 71. A composite animal with several heads, Mohenjo-daro; see p. 31.

Fig. 72. Four animals on the Paśupati seal, Mohenjo-daro; see p. 30.

Fig. 73. A composite figure with several animal heads. Mohenjo-daro.

Fig. 74. Four animals on a seal, Indus Valley.

Figs. 75-78. Four animals separately depicted on Indus Valley seals; see p. 31.

Fig. 79. a-d. Four animals depicted on copper tablets from Mohenjo-daro; see p. 31.

Figs. 80-83. Four animals separately on ancient coins, after Foucher; see p. 33.

Fig. 84. Elephant, Bull, Horse and Lion, four animals on a ring-stone, Patna.

Fig. 85. Four animals on Sārnāth Lion-capital.

Fig. 86. Four animals on a relief from Amaravati.

Fig. 87. Four animals on a moon-stone from Nagarjunikonda.

Fig. 88. Four animals on a moon-stone from Anurādhapur, Ceylon; see, p. 35.

Figs. 89-92. *Chandra-śilā* or moon-stone from Anurādhapur, Ceylon; see p. 35.

Fig. 93. A steatite plaque showing four animals from Akra, now in Indian Museum, Calcutta (By courtesy: Superintendent, Ind. Museum); see p. 35.

Fig. 94. Four animals and four *Chakras* on a Rajasthani painting, 18th century, now in the National Museum, New Delhi; see p. 35.

Fig. 95. Four animals around a lotus flower or Sun symbol, embroidered on a Kanthā cloth from Bengal, 19th cent.; see p. 37-8. (By courtesy: Rai Krishnadas, Bharat Kala Bhavan, B.H.U.).

Fig. 96. Pillar showing four animals in the classical art of Ceylon. Stele by the northern Vahalkada at Kaṇṭaka Chetiya, Mihintale, Ceylon; see Devendra, *Classical Sinhalese Sculptures*, fig. 9.

Fig. 63. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with overflowing lotuses, Sānchī; see p. 26.

Fig. 64. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with flowers and conventionalised foliage; Amaravati; see p. 26.

Fig. 65. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with a decorative basement, a girdle of flower garland and with overflowing lotuses on the top; see p. 26.

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Fig. 67. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* from Mathurā; see p. 26.

Fig. 68. *Pūrṇa-ghaṭa* with lotus scroll from Ceylon; see p. 26.

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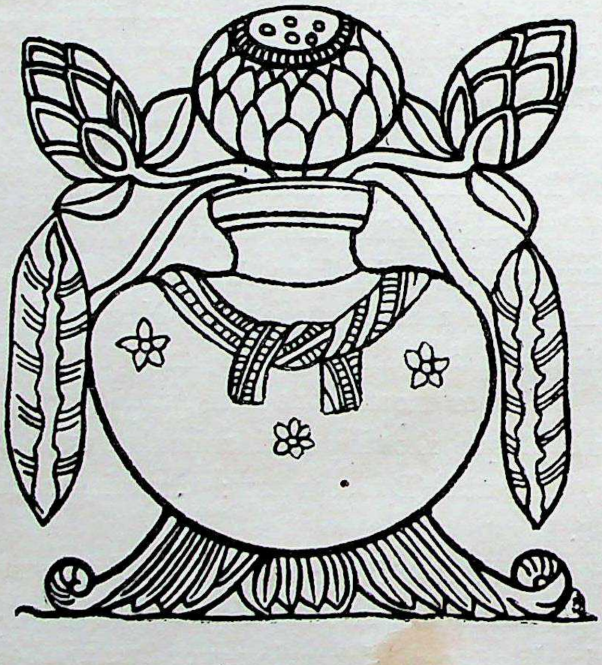
Fig. 97. Chakravartī Sovereign with his seven jewels from a relief at Amaravati; see p. 46-7.

Fig. 98. Ring-stone with a concentric band of six animal figures from Murtaziganj, Pāṭaliputra, now in Patna Museum. By courtesy: Curator, Patna Museum.

Fig. 99. Ring-stone with a band of racing animals on a ring-stone from Murtaziganj, Patna.

Fig. 100. Lion Capital showing four animals on the abacus, from Udaigiri. After Cunningham, *Inscriptions of Aśoka*, pl. 30.

Figs. 101-104. Four animals, viz., elephant, bull, horse and lion, on a moon-stone at Nagarjunikonda, showing the vigorous rendering of the four animals of the Sārnāth Lion-capital in a more artistic setting.



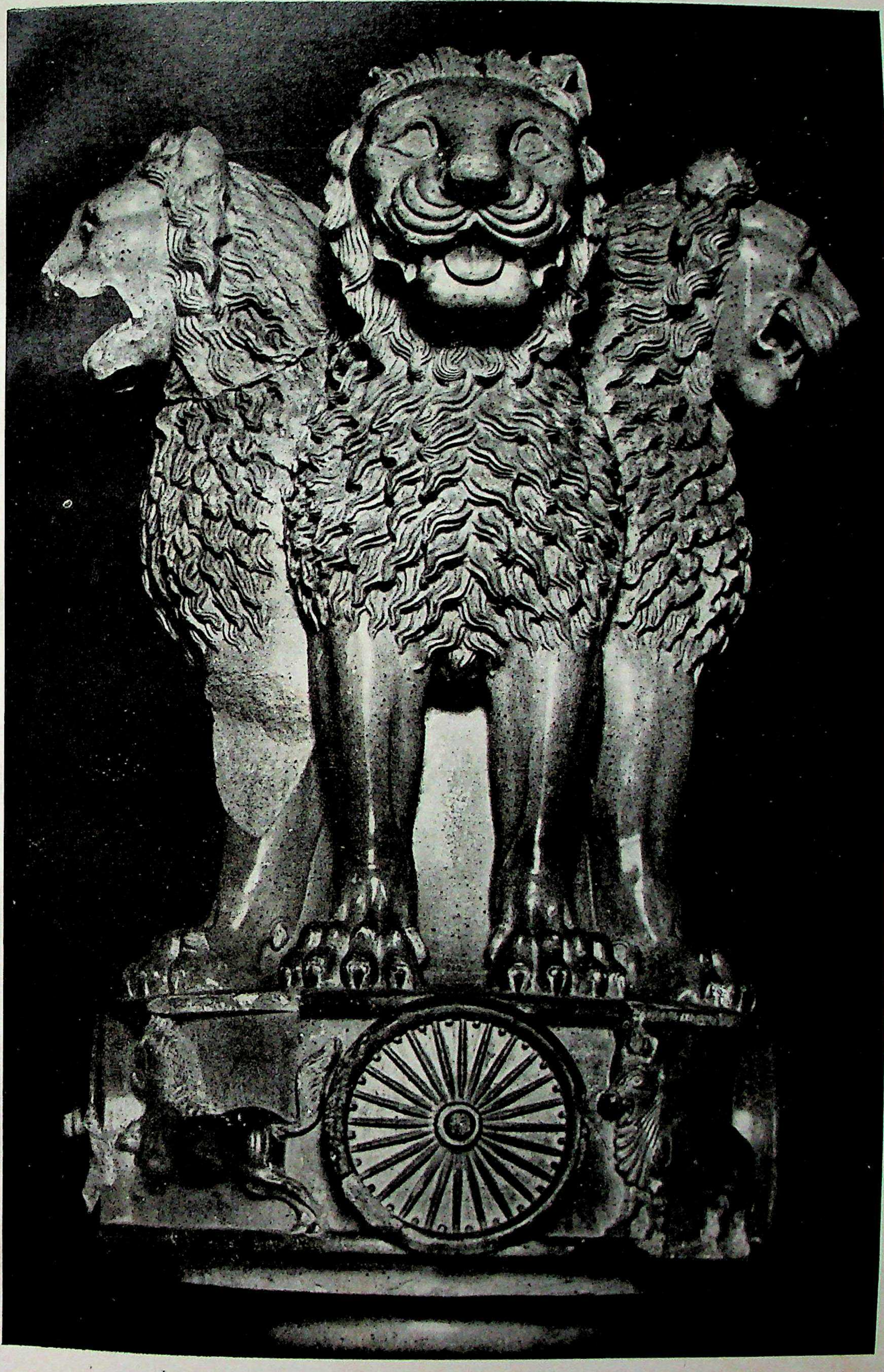


Fig. 1–Lion Capital, Sarnath



Fig. 2–Bull on the abacus of Sarnath Capital



Fig. 3–Lion on the abacus of Sarnath Capital

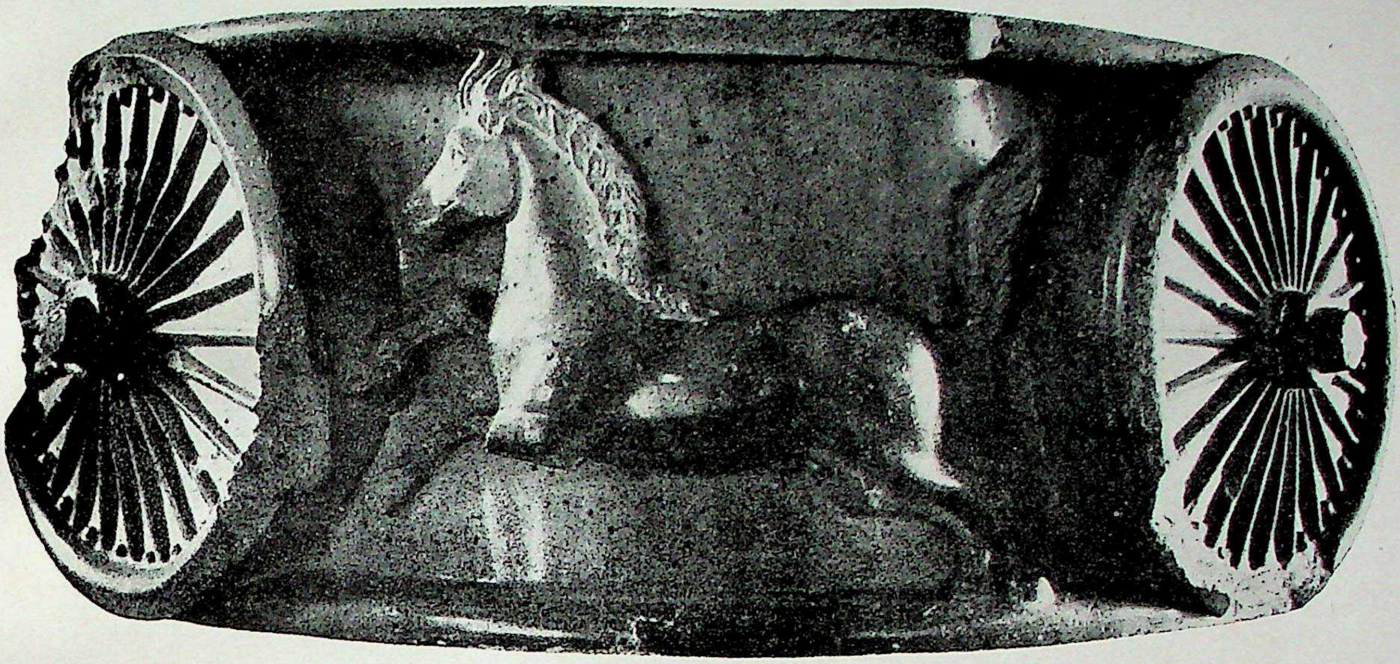


Fig. 4–Horse on the abacus of Sarnath Capital

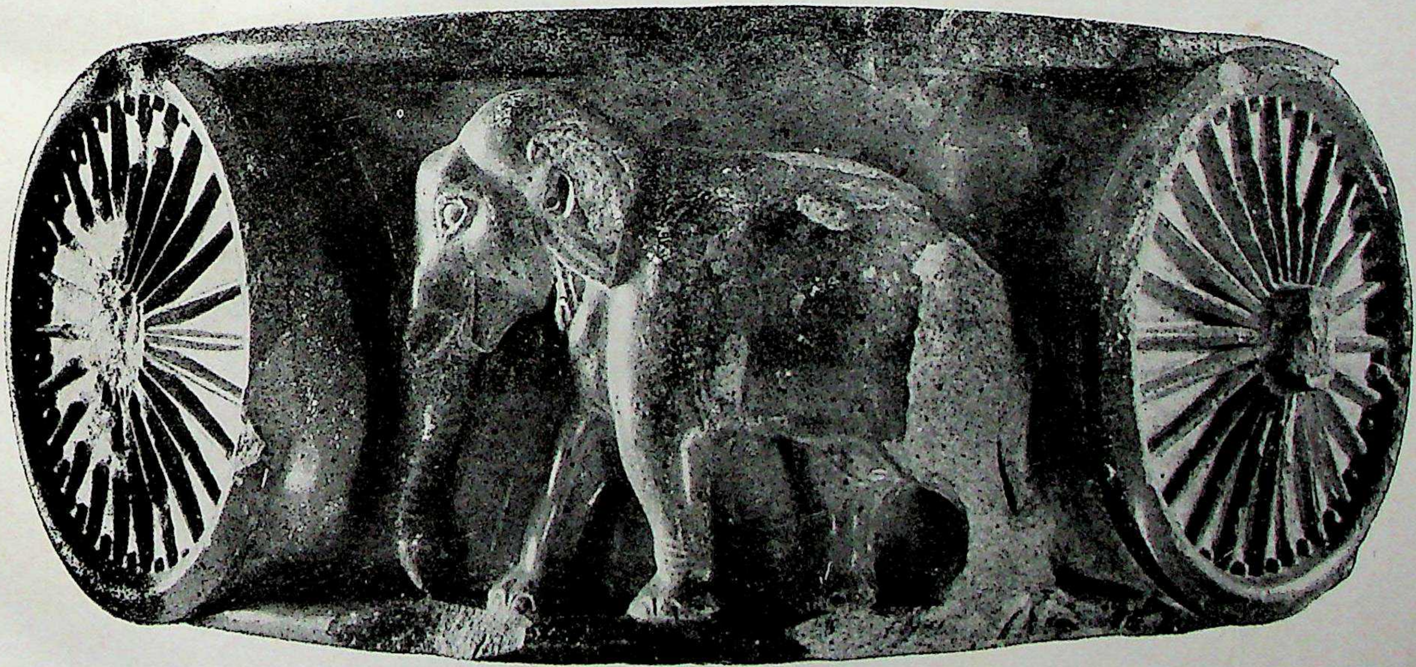


Fig. 5–Elephant on the abacus of Sarnath Capital

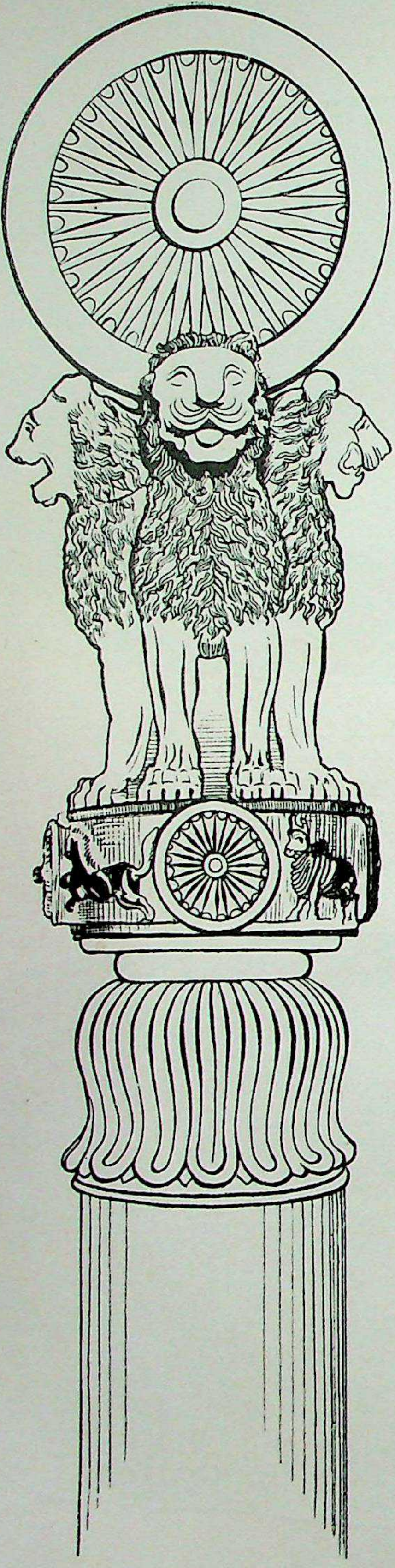


Fig. 6 b–Reconstructed Aśokan Pillar at Sarnath

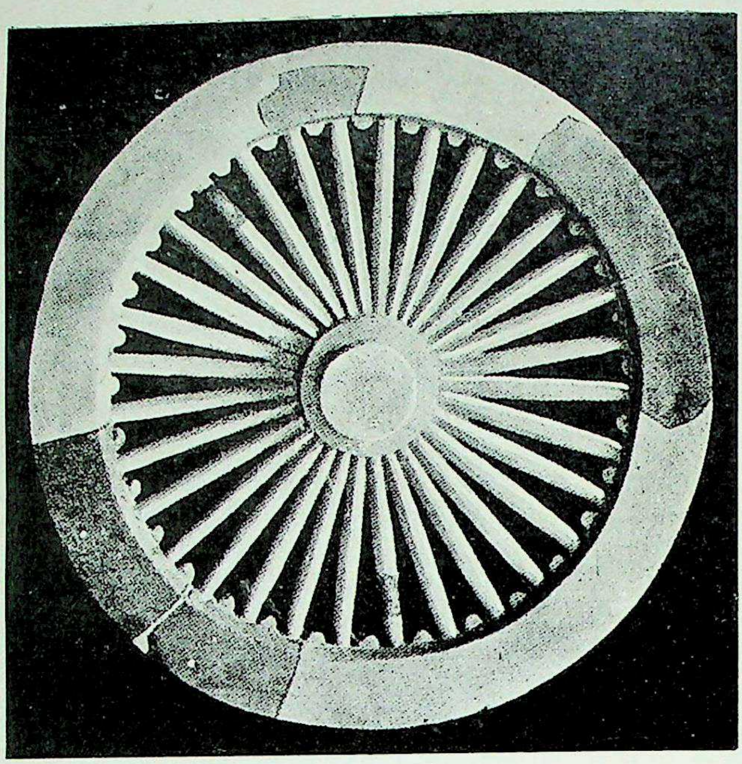


Fig. 6 a–Reconstructed Mahā-Chakra

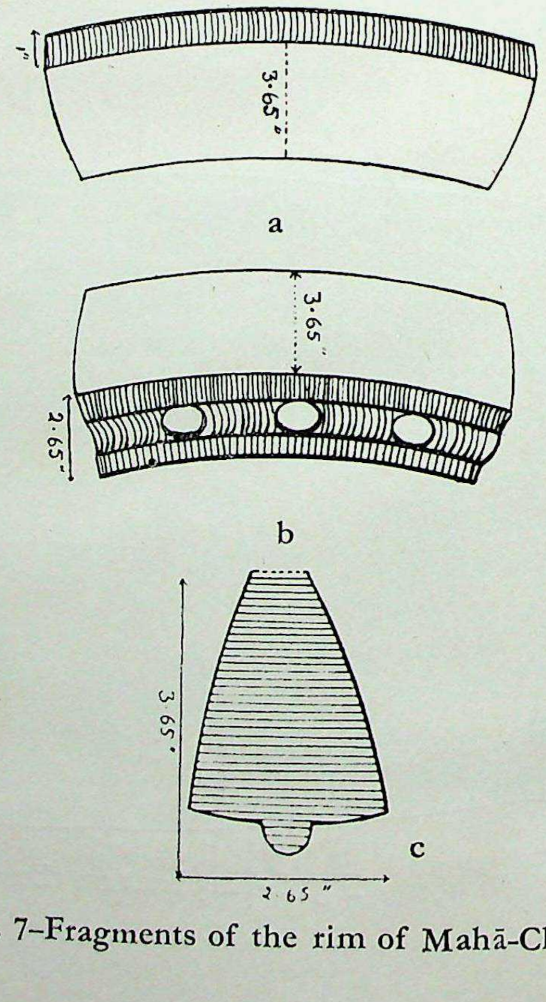


Fig. 7–Fragments of the rim of Mahā-Chakra

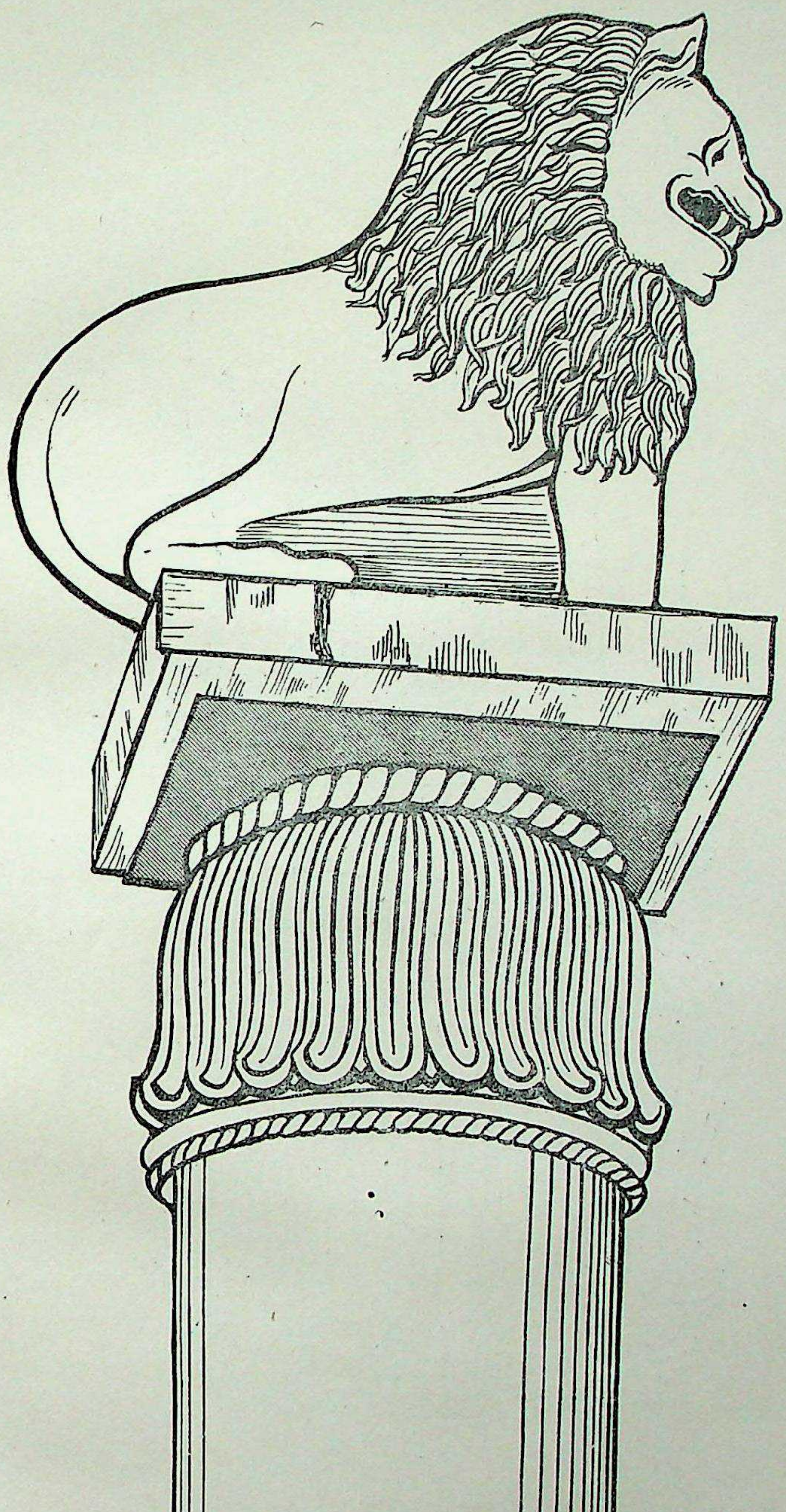


Fig. 8 Lion Capital, Basarh-Bakhira, Maurya Period

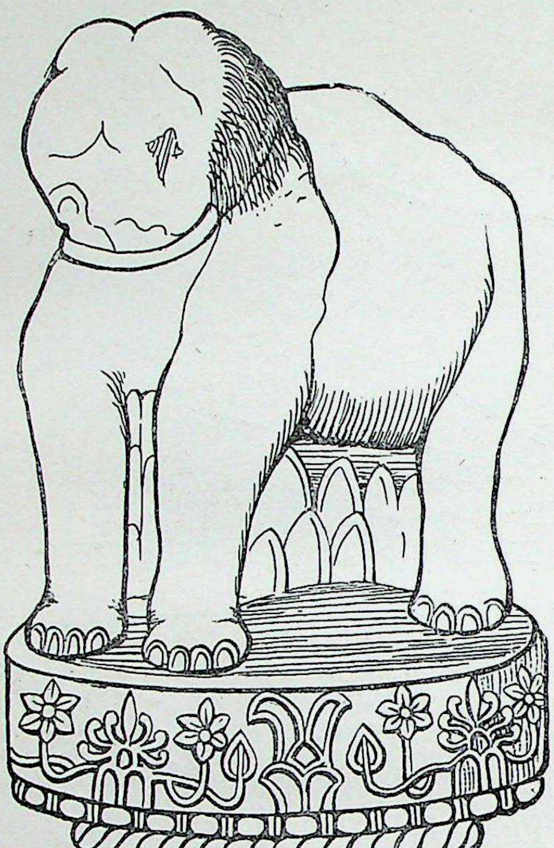


Fig. 9 Elephant Capital, Sankisa, Maurya Period

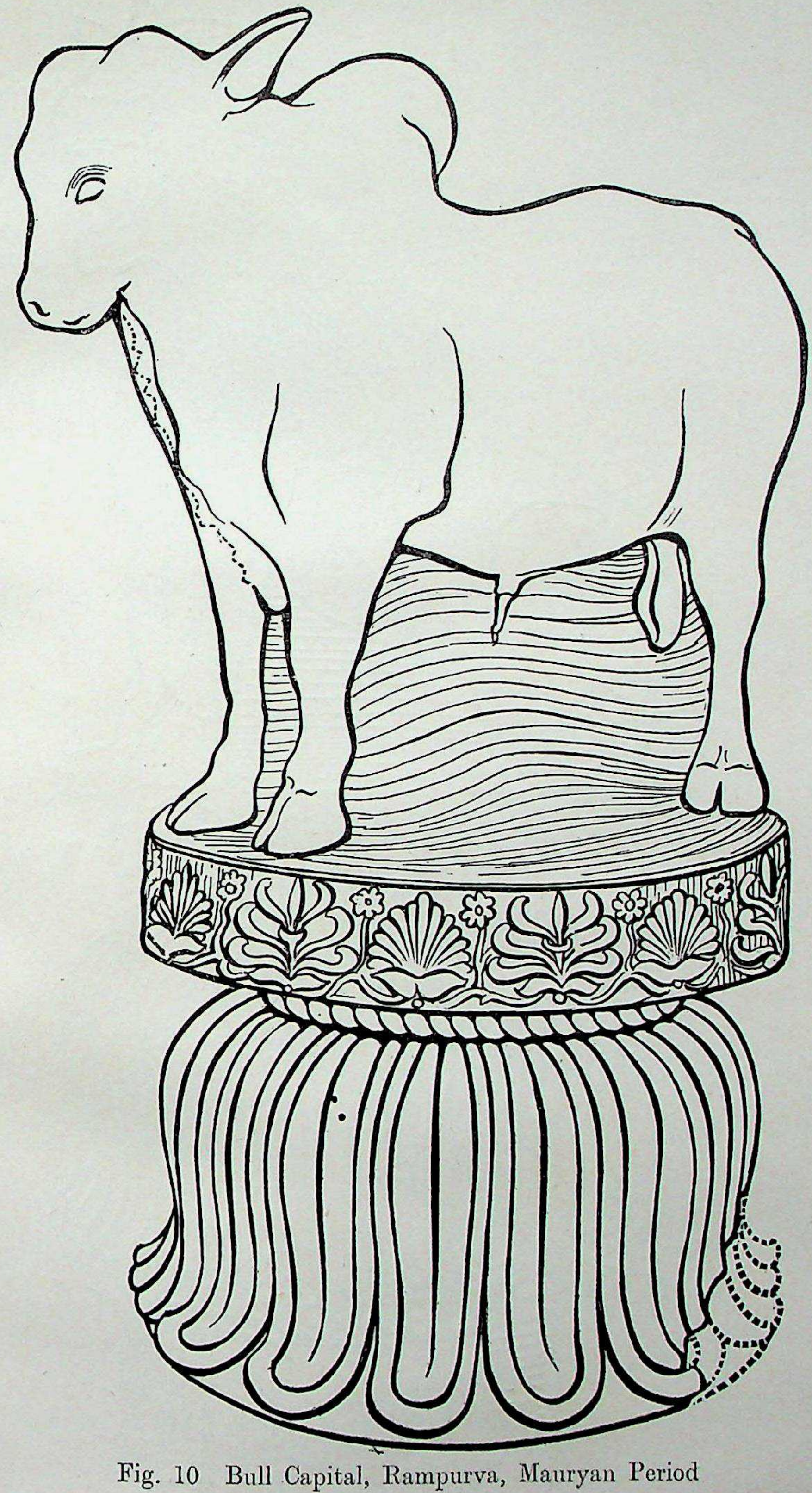


Fig. 10 Bull Capital, Rampurva, Mauryan Period

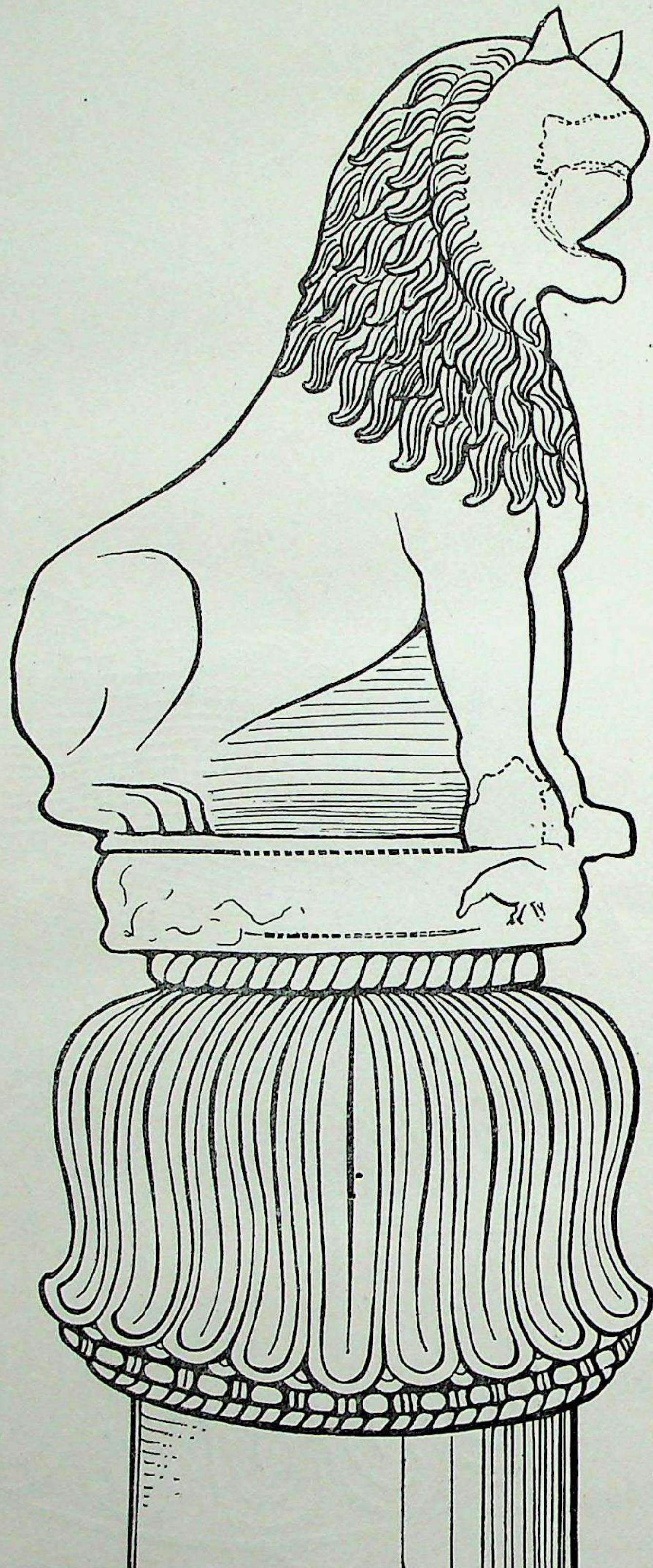


Fig. 11 Lion Capital, Lauria Nandangarh, Maurya Period

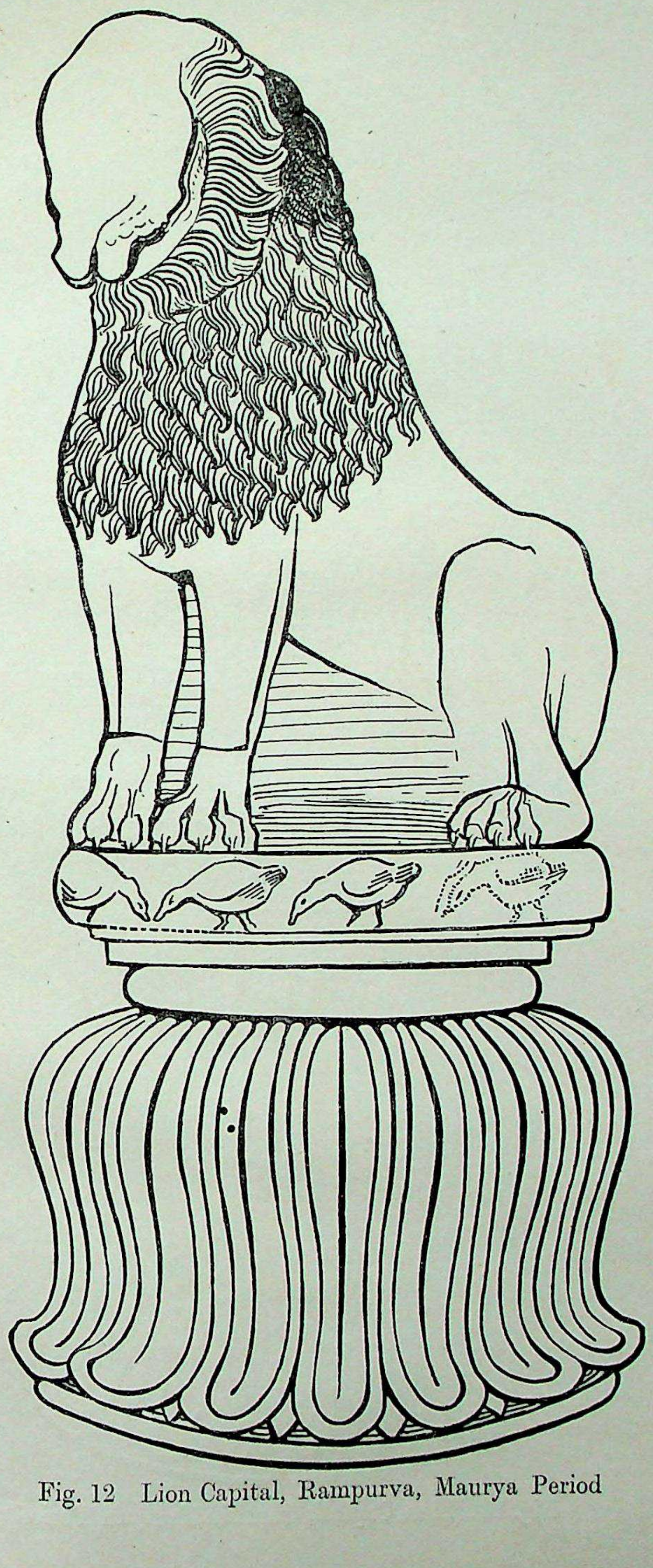


Fig. 12 Lion Capital, Rampurva, Maurya Period

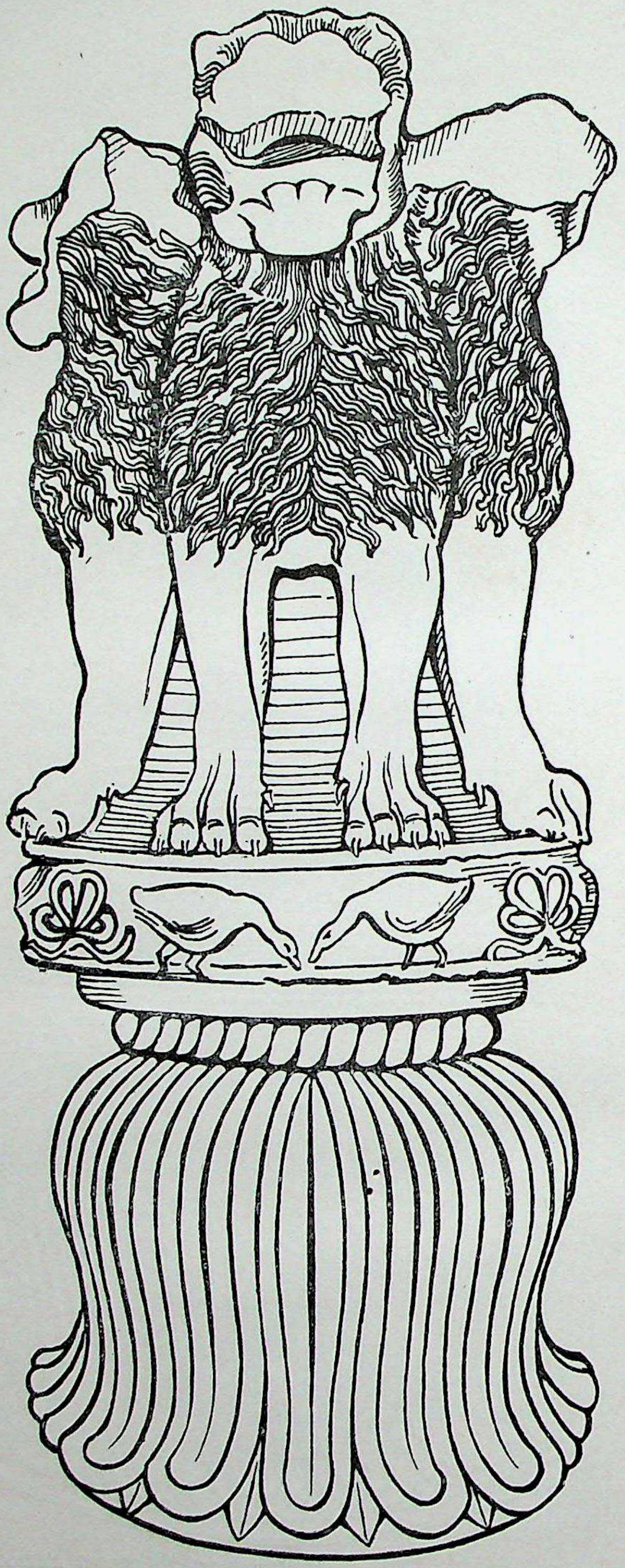


Fig. 13 Lion Capital, Sanchi, Mauryan Period

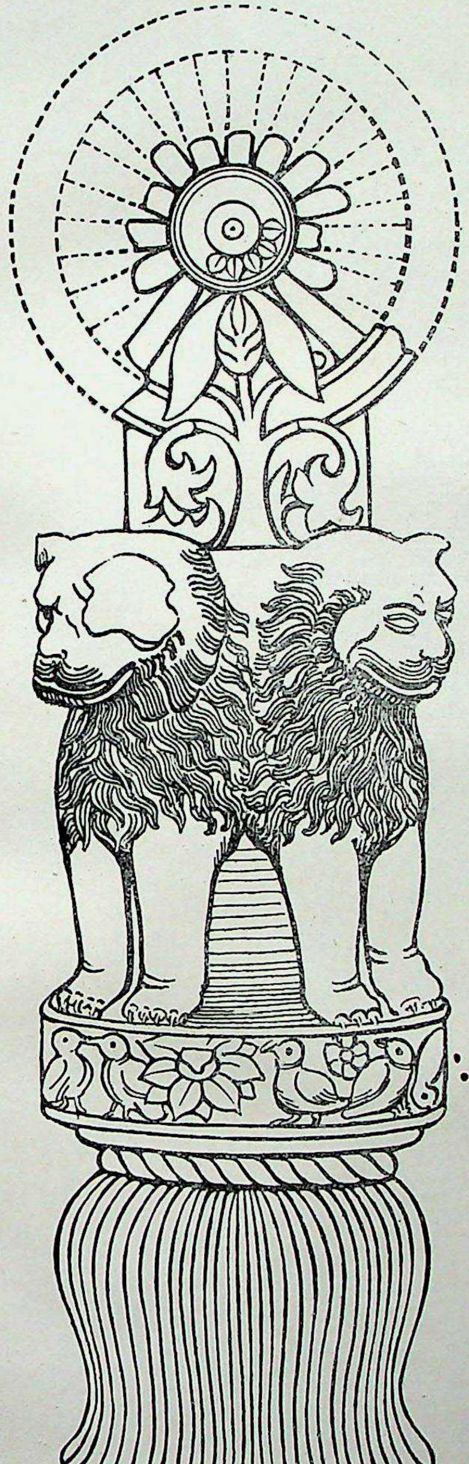


Fig. 14 Lion Capital, Sanchi, Gupta Period

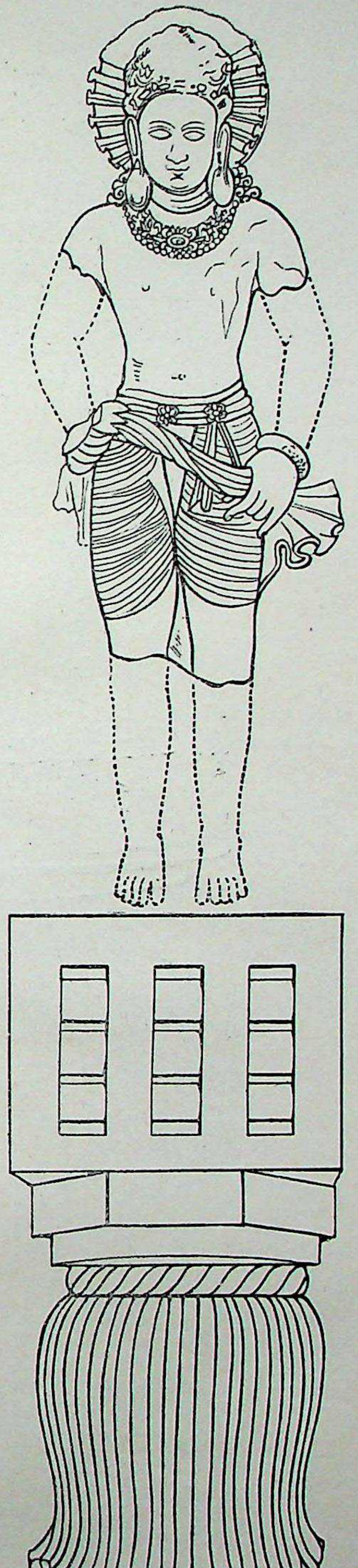


Fig. 15 Vajrapāṇi Capital, Sanchi, Gupta Period

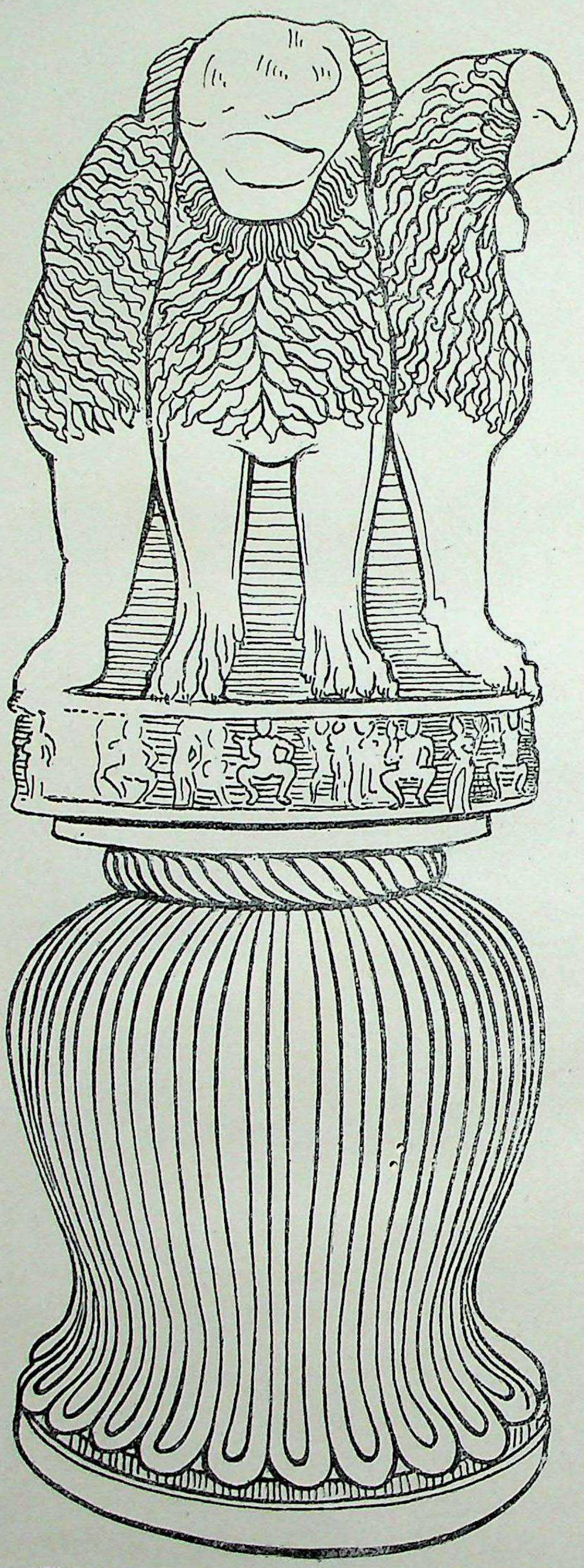


Fig 16 Lion Capital, Udaigiri, Gupta Period

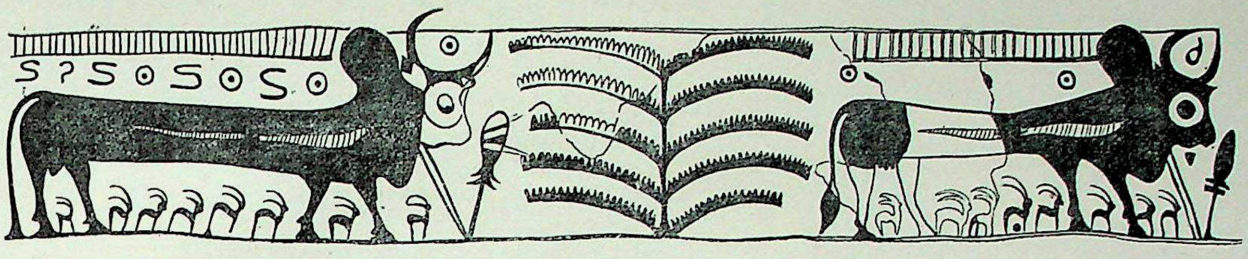


Fig. 17 On Pottery, Kulli

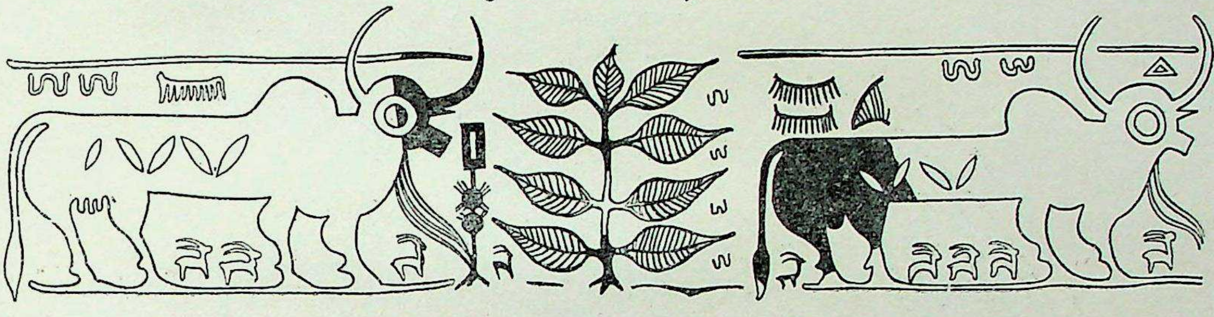


Fig. 18 On Pottery, Kulli

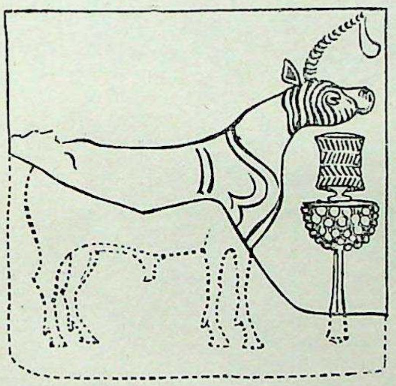


Fig. 19 *a*

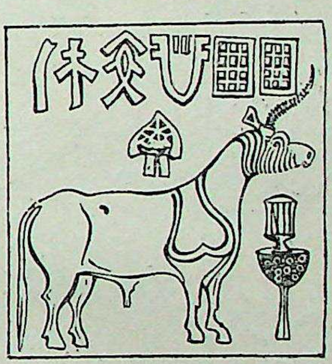


Fig. 19 *b*

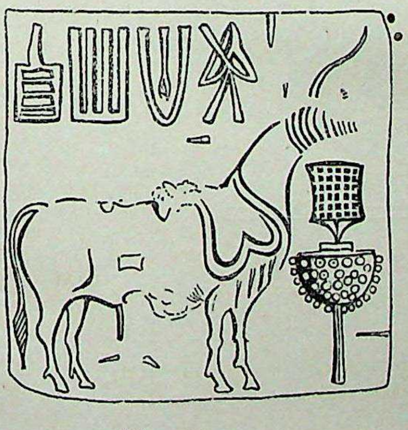


Fig. 20 *a*

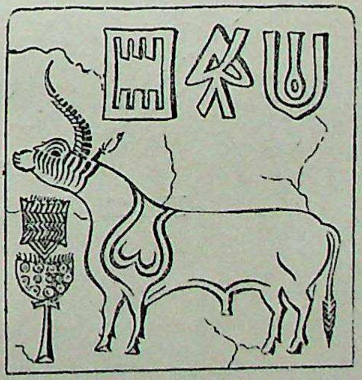


Fig. 20 *b*

Pillar on Indus Valley Seals

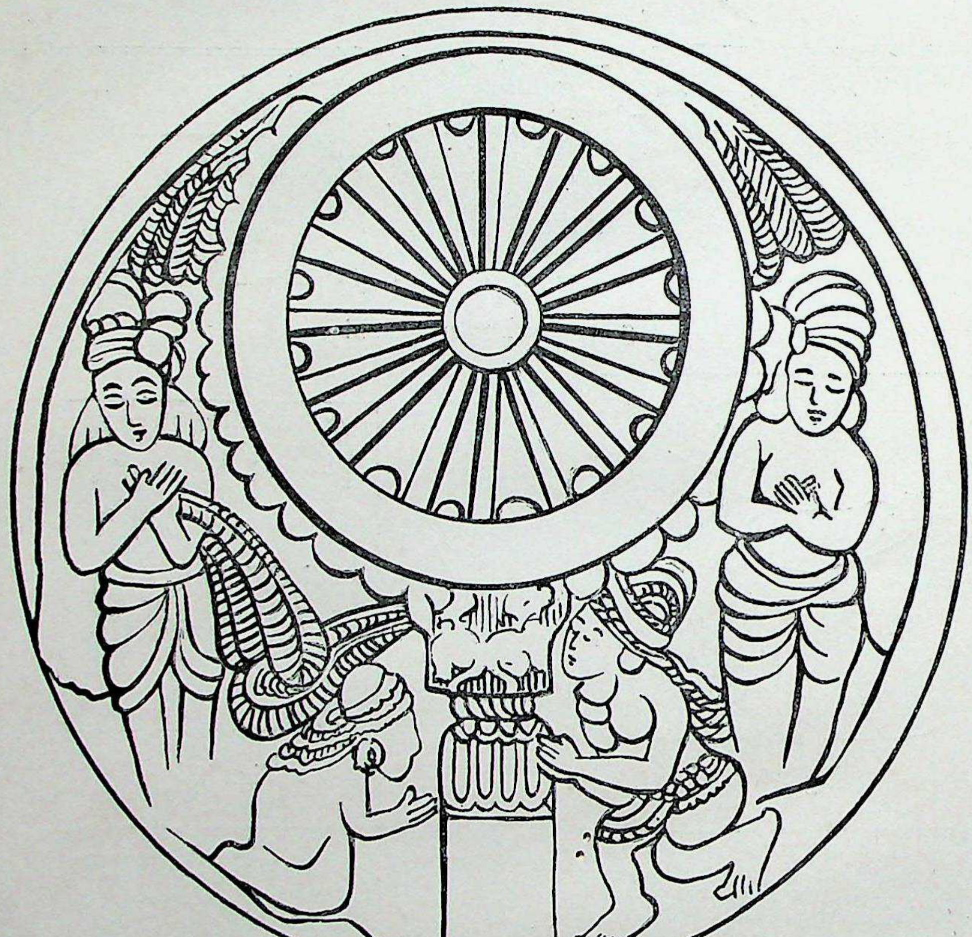


Fig. 21 Worship of Chakradhvaja, Bharhut

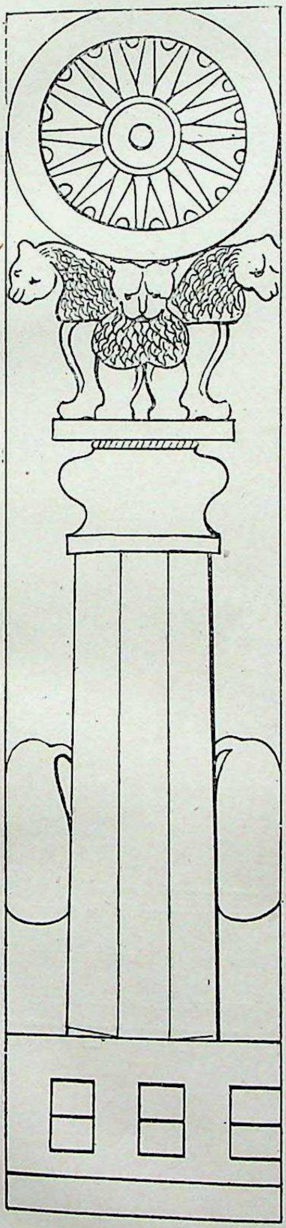


Fig. 22

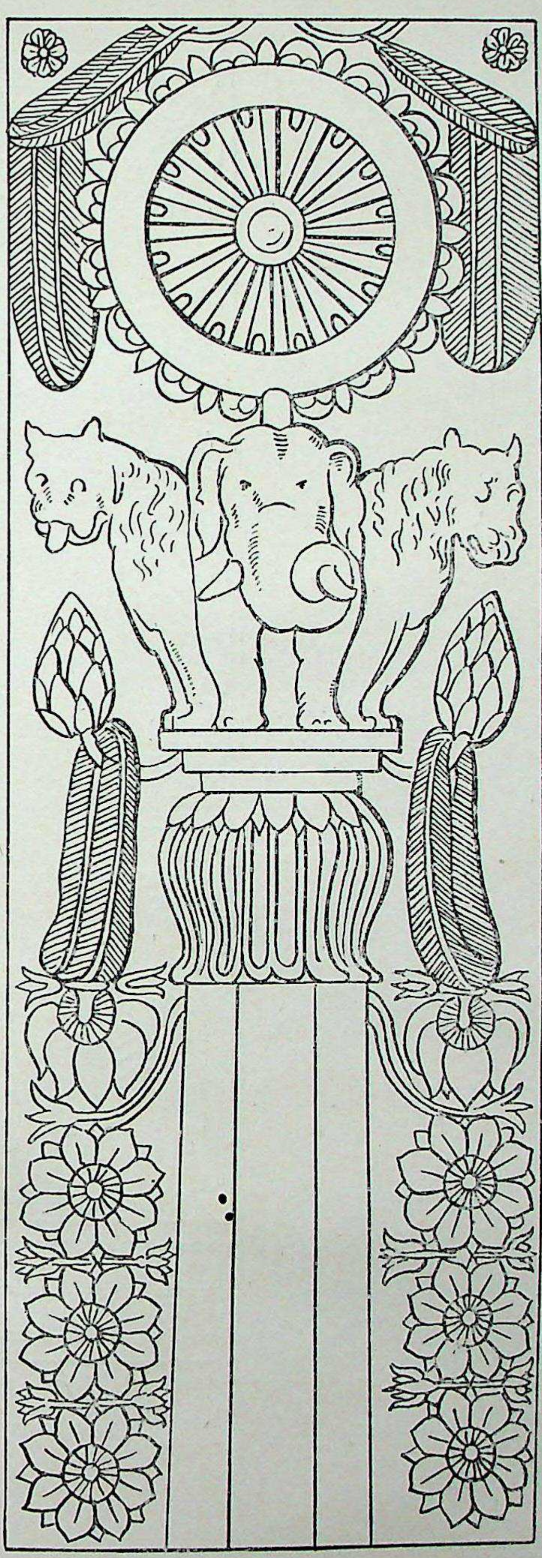


Fig. 24

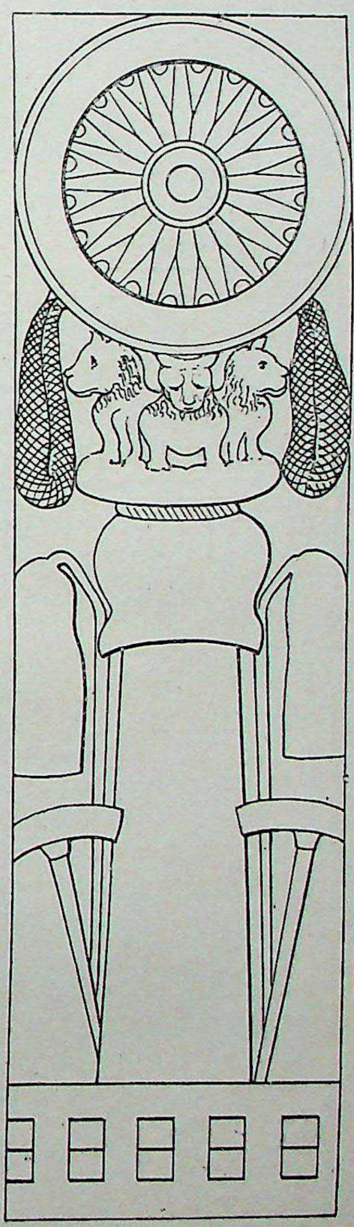


Fig. 23

Chakra-topped Pillars carved on Sanchi Gateways

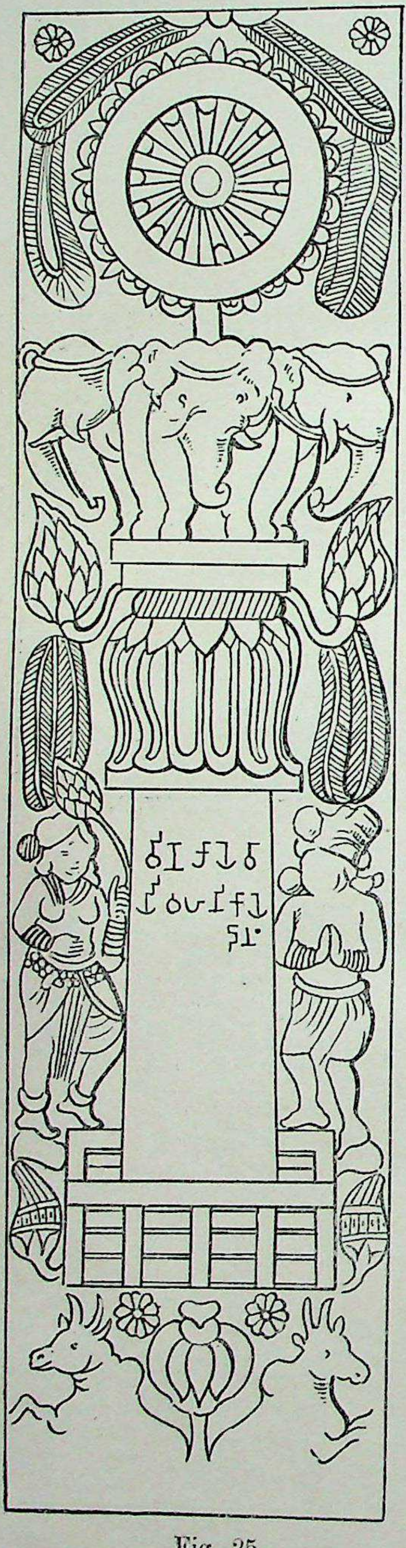


Fig. 25



Fig. 26

Worship of Chakradhvaja, on Sanchi Gateways

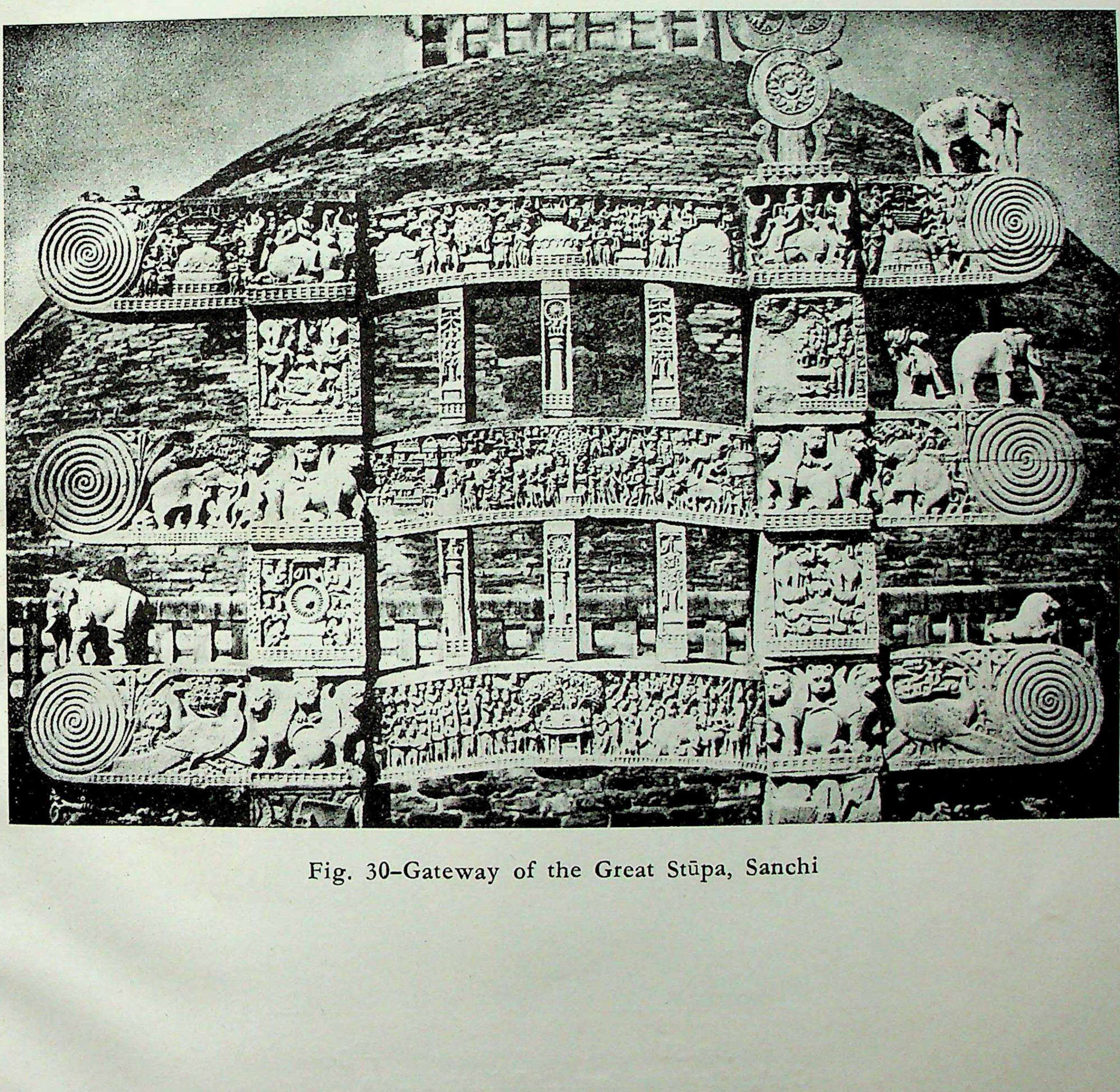


Fig. 30–Gateway of the Great Stūpa, Sanchi



Fig. 31

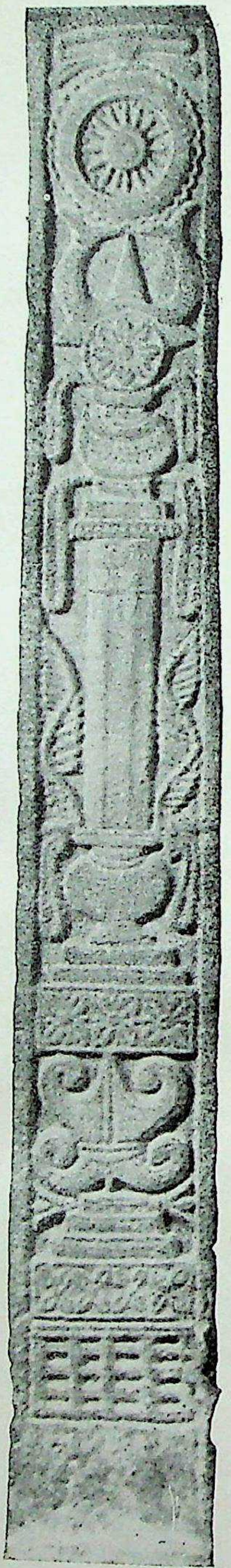


Fig. 32

Chakradhvja on Sarnath Railing Pillars

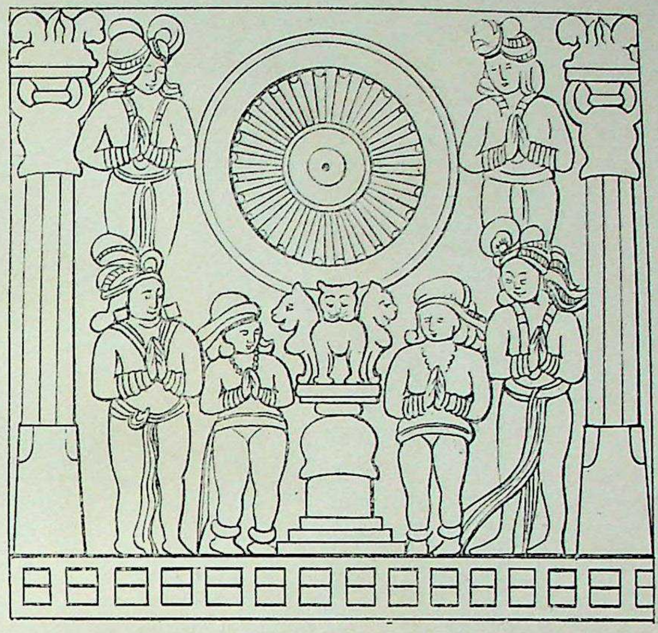


Fig. 29

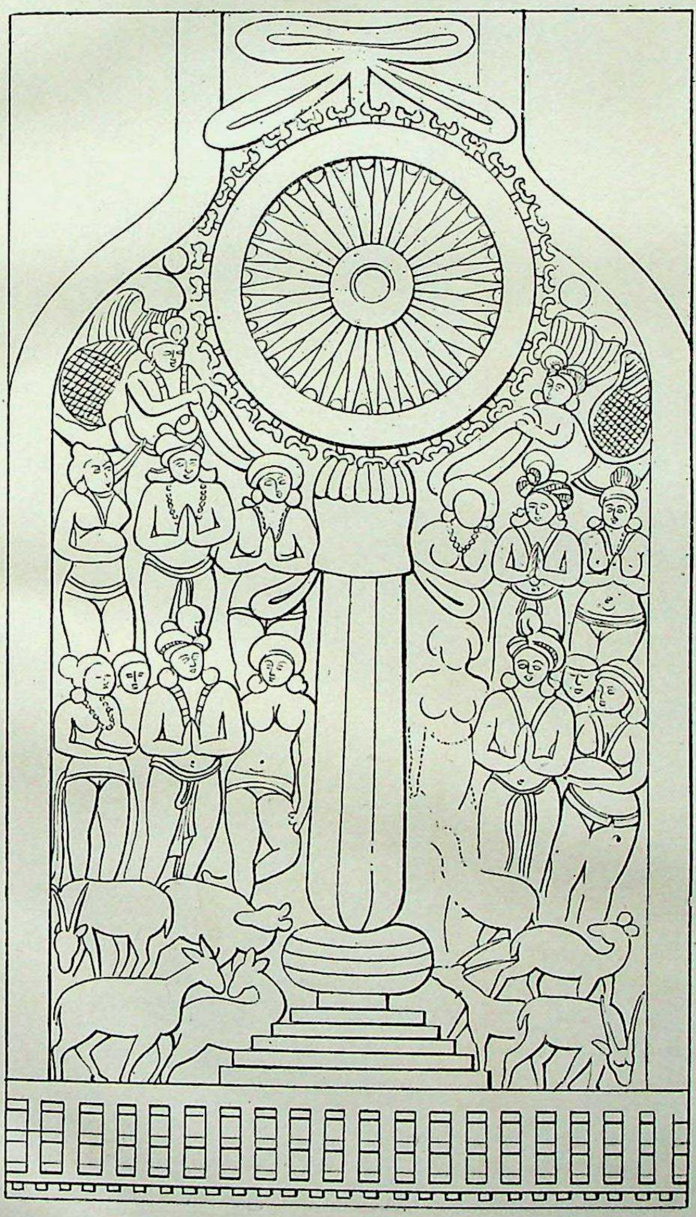


Fig. 28

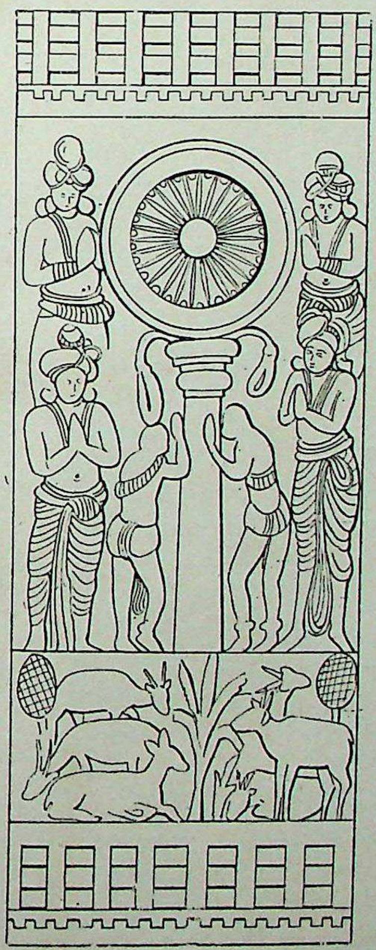


Fig. 27

Worship of Chakradhvaja carved on Sanchi Gateway

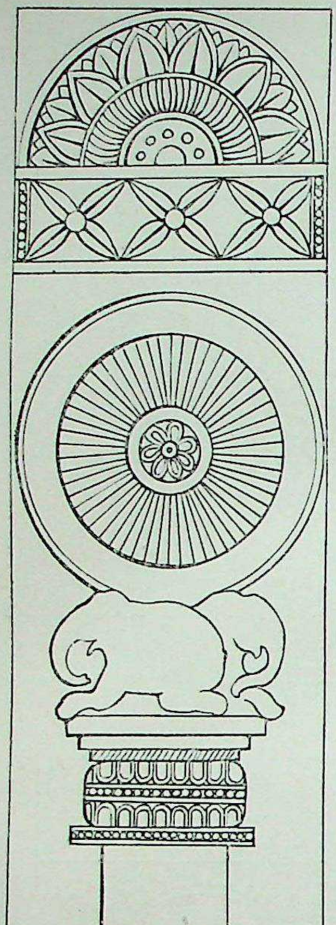


Fig. 33
Chakradhvaja from
Amaravati relief

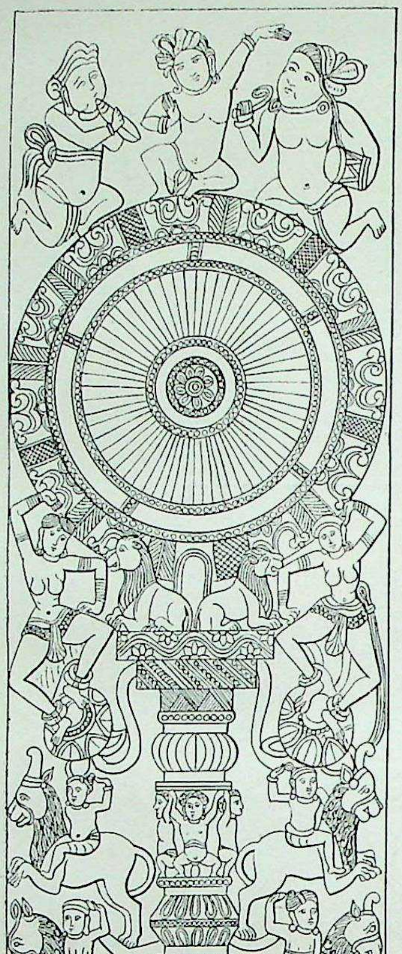


Fig. 34
Chakradhvaja worship from
Amaravati relief

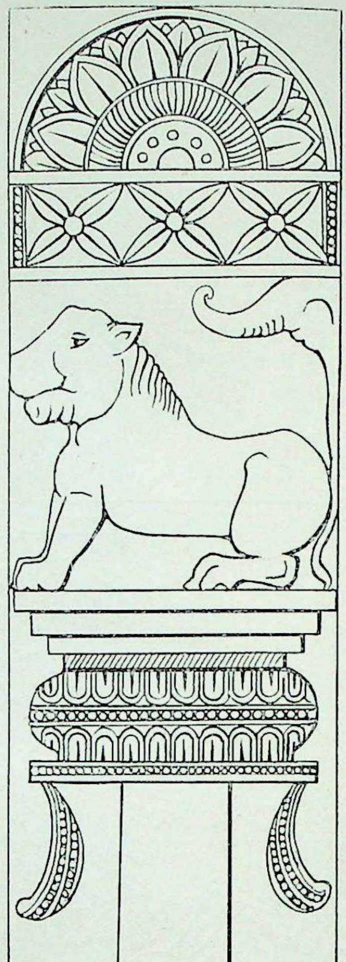


Fig. 35
Lion Capital from
Amaravati relief

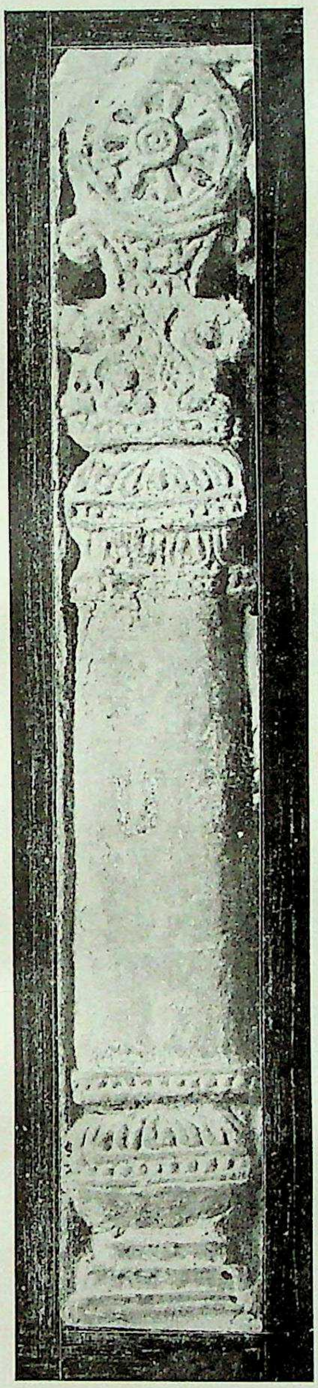


Fig. 38
Chakradhvaja relief
from Mathura

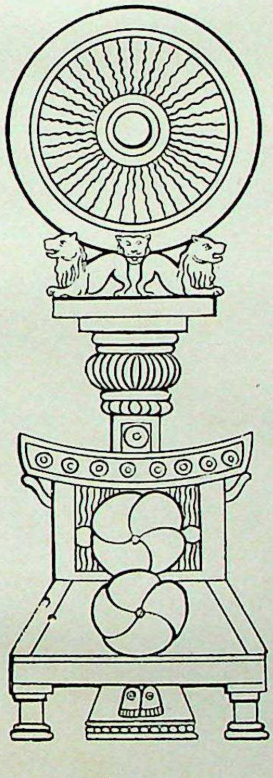


Fig. 37
Chakramaha and
Chūḍāmaha,
Nagarjunikonda



Fig. 39
Chakradhvaja relief
from Mathura



Fig. 41–Worship of the Chakra, Bharhut

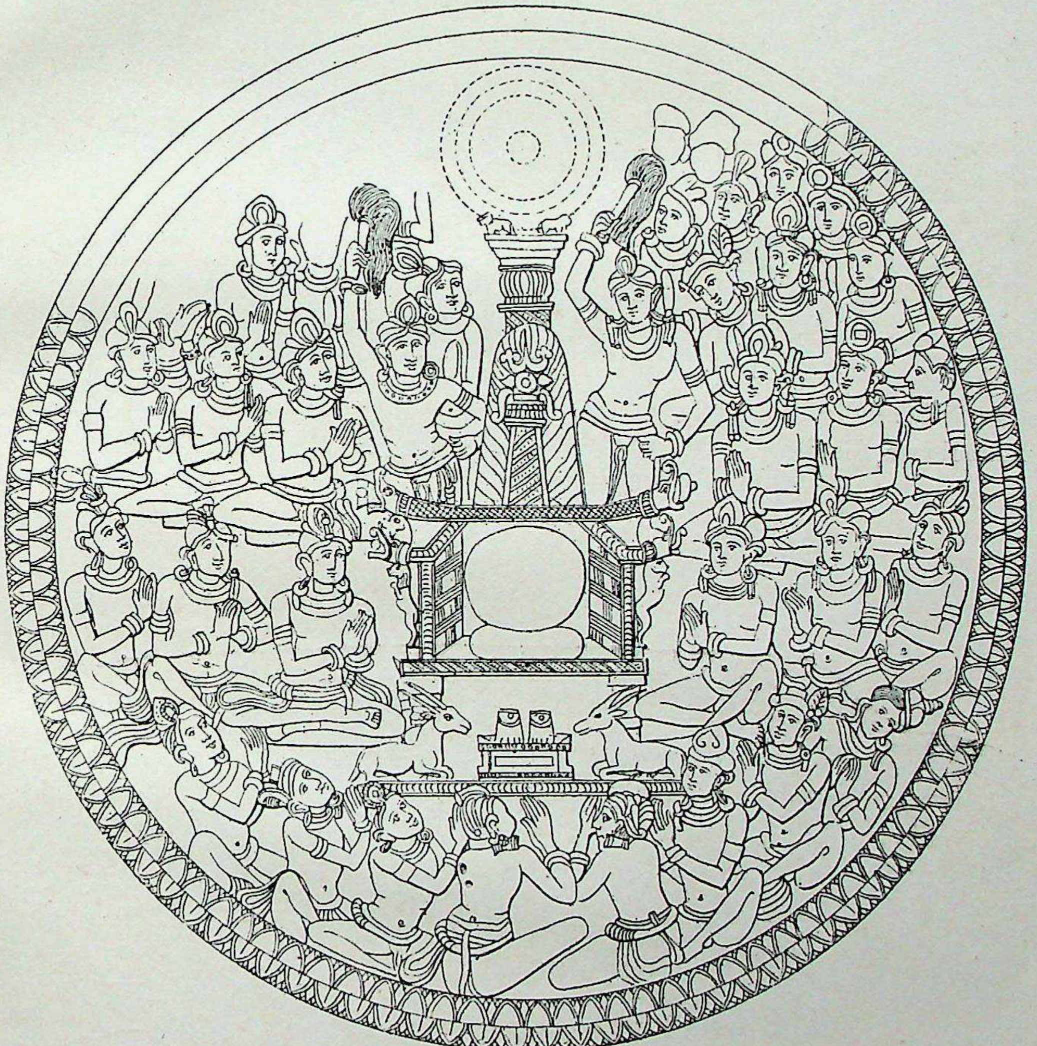


Fig. 36 Worship of Chakradhvaja, Amaravati

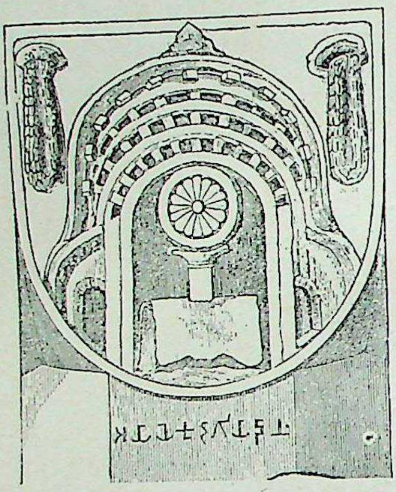


Fig. 40
Chakradhvaja, Bodhgaya

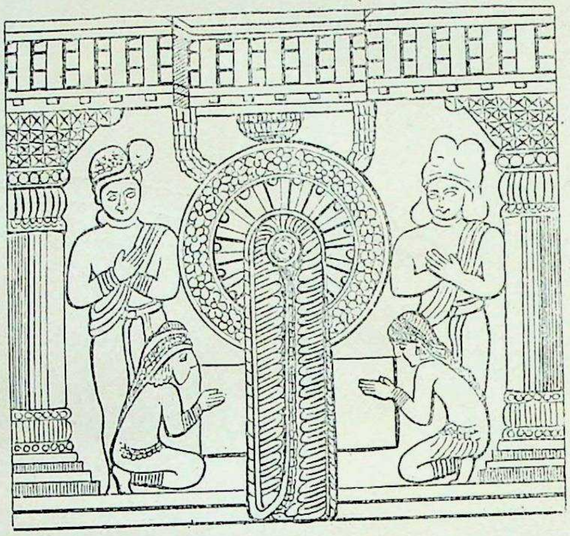


Fig. 42
Chakra Worship, Bharhut

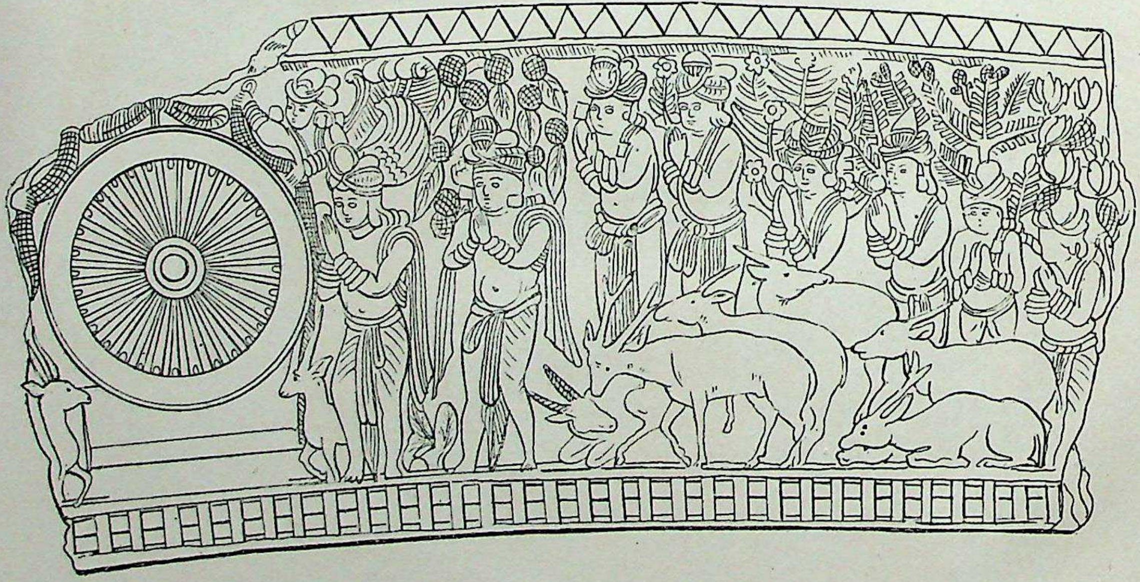


Fig. 43 Chakra Worship, Sanchi

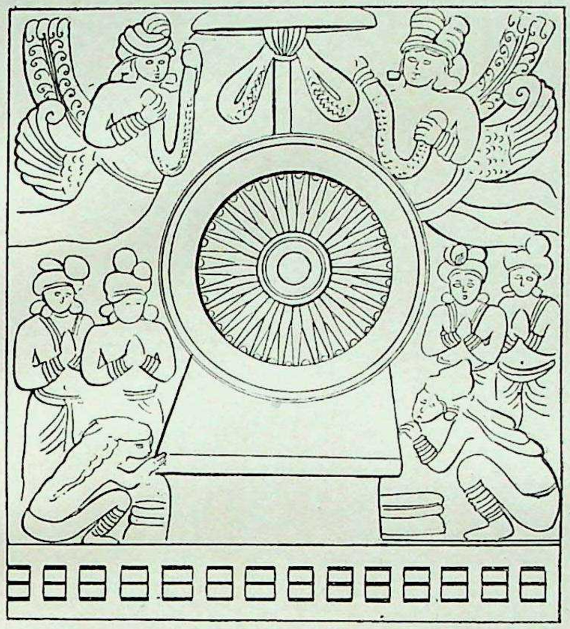


Fig. 44

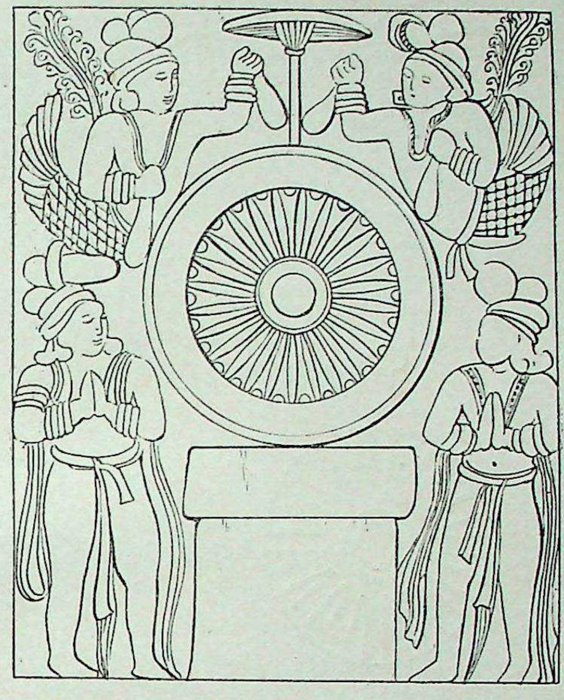


Fig. 45

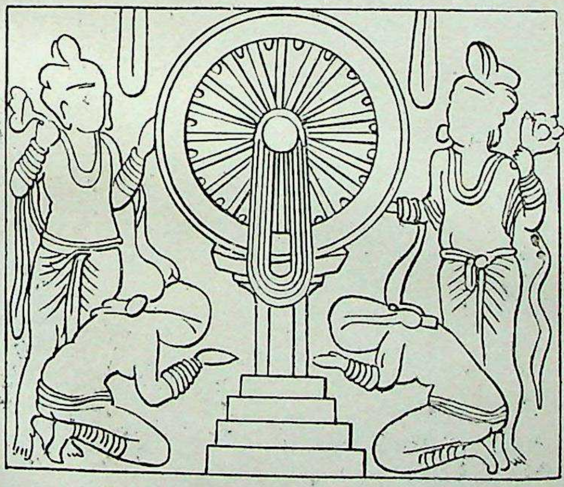


Fig. 46 *a*

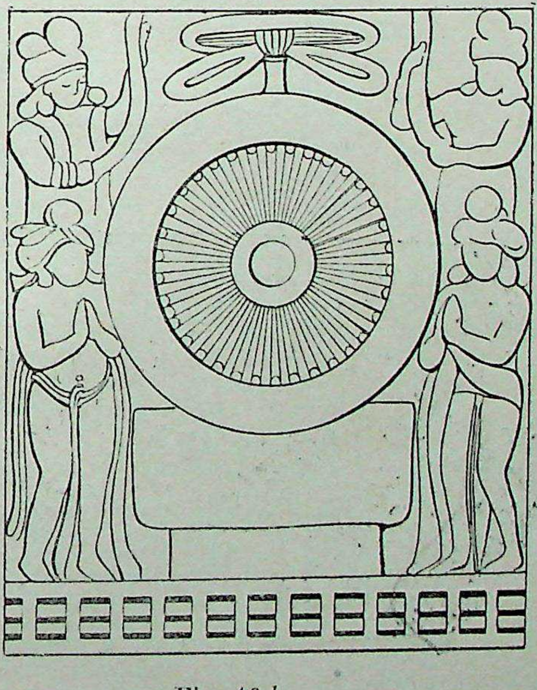
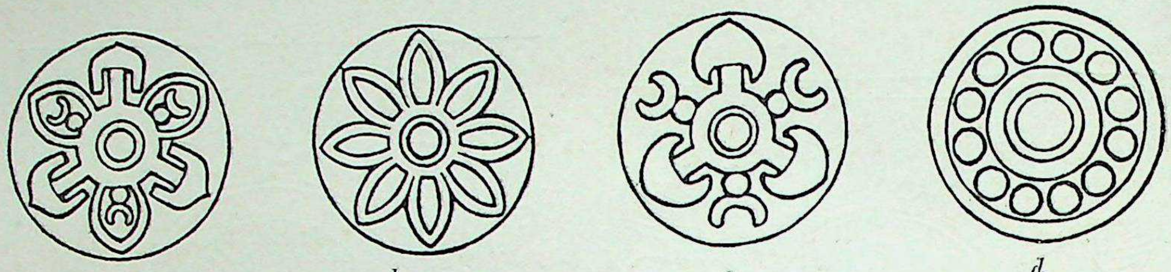


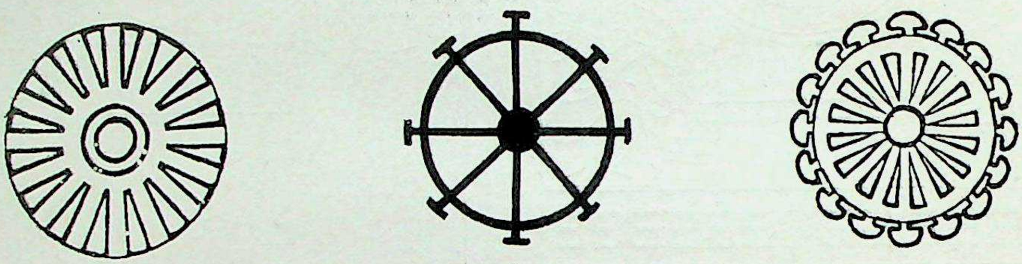
Fig. 46 *b*

Scenes depicting cult of Chakra Worship from railings of Sanchi Gateways



a *b* *c* *d*

Fig. 49 Chakra on ancient Indian Coins



a *b* *c*

Fig. 50 Chakra on ancient Indian Coins



a *b*

Fig. 51 Chakra on Jaina and Buddhist Image Pedestals, Mathura



Fig. 47–Chakra Worship, Amaravati



Fig. 48–Chakra Worship, Nagarjunikonda

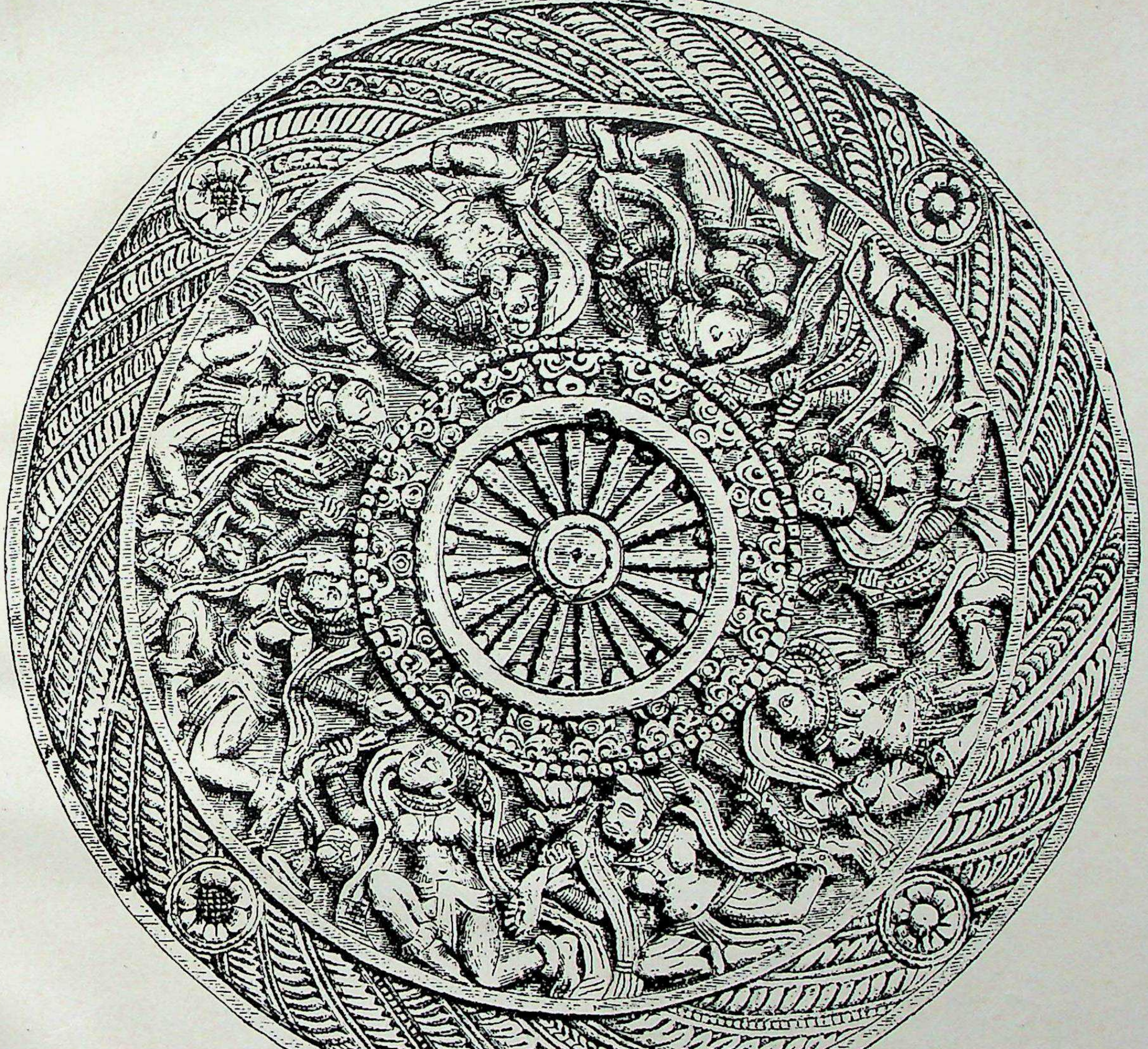


Fig. 52 Chakrapaṭṭa, Mathura



Fig. 53 Svastika-paṭṭa, Mathura

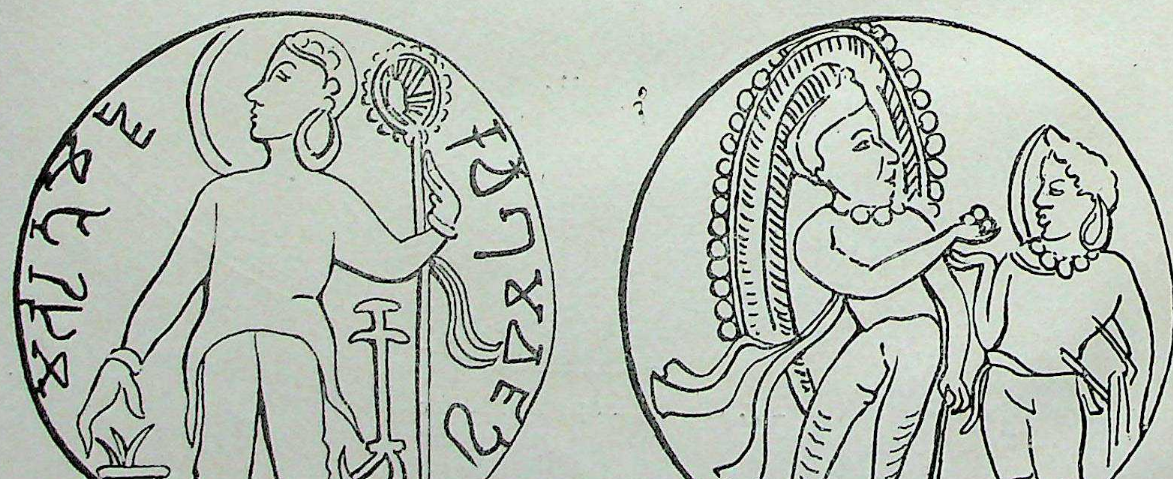


Fig. 54 Chakradhvaja and Chakravikrama Coins of Chandragupta II

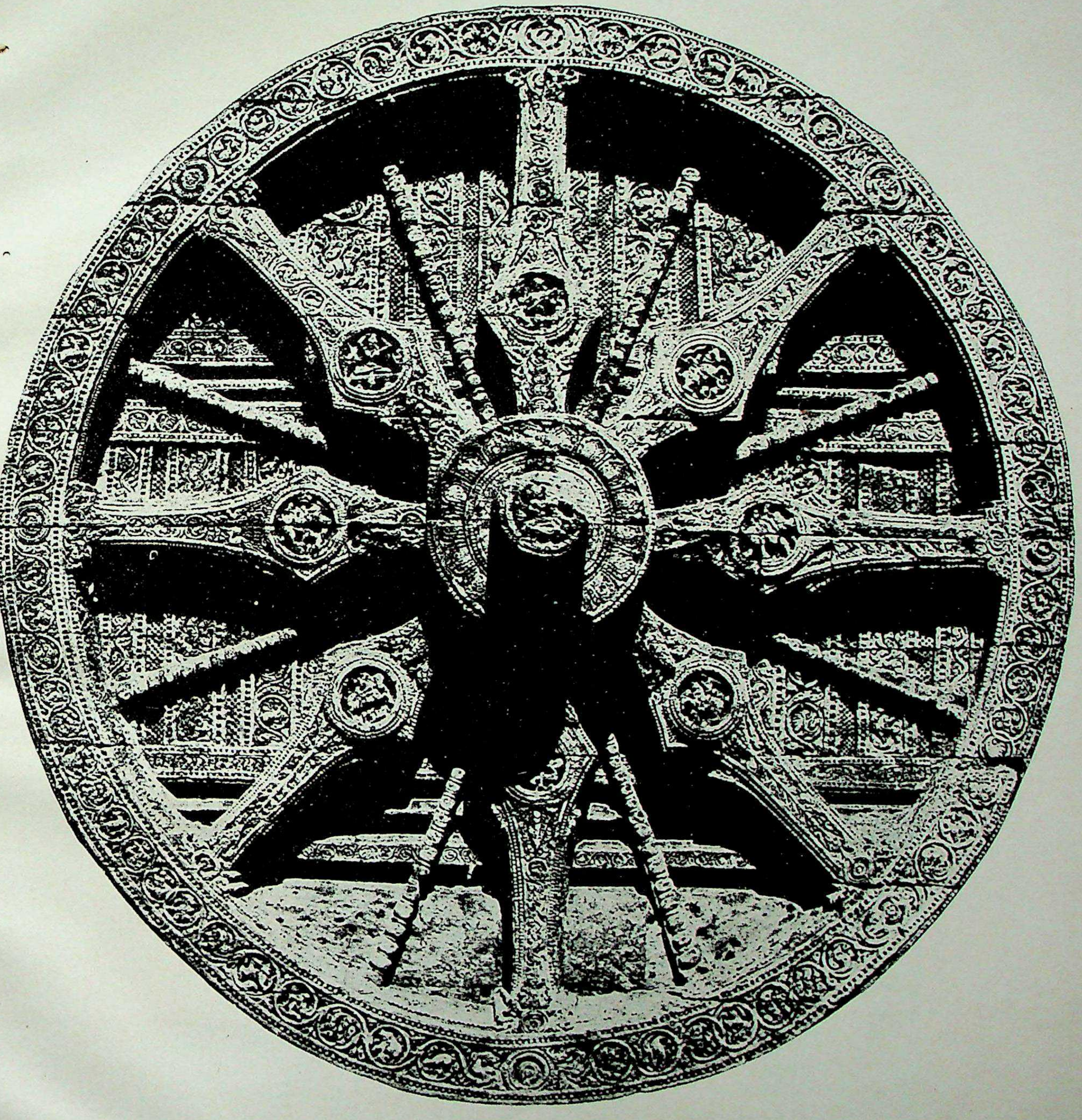


Fig. 55–Wheel from Sun-Chariot, Konarak

PLATES I & II

These plates correct those published in the last *Journal*.

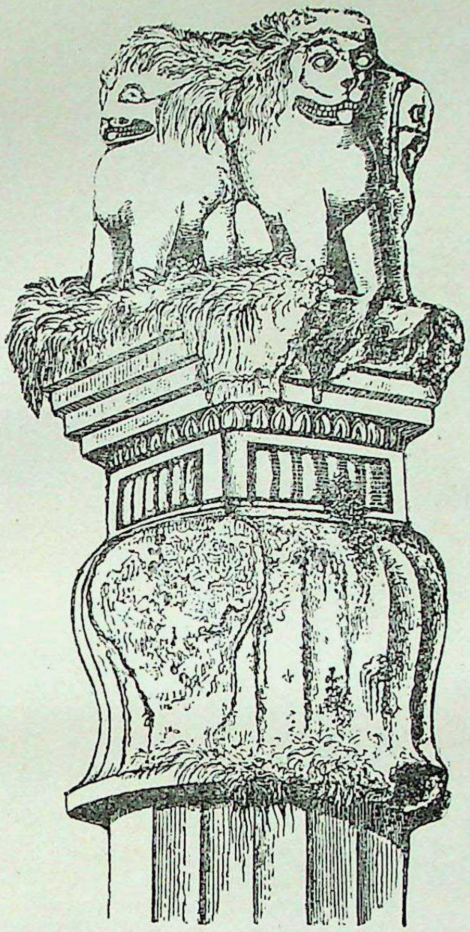


Fig. 58 Lion Pillar in front of Karle Chaitya-hall

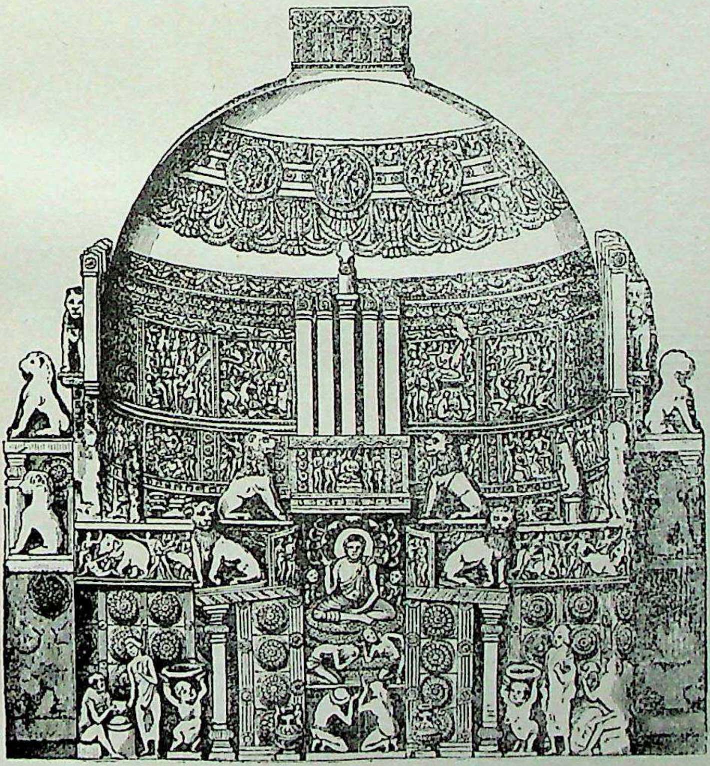


Fig. 57 Replica of Amaravati Stūpa showing Āyaka-Khambhas

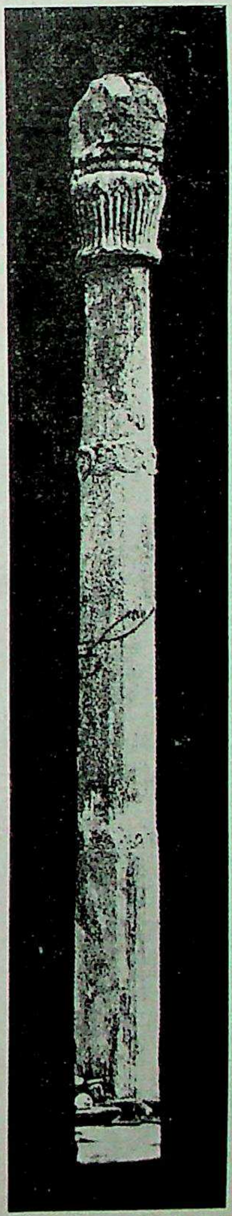


Fig. 56 Garuḍadhvaja Pillar, Besnagar

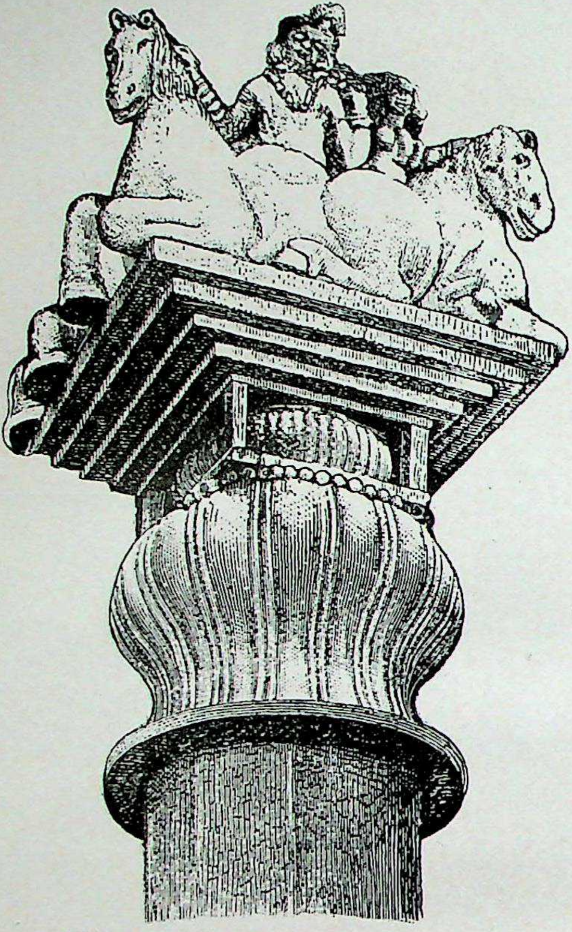


Fig. 59 Pillar in Bedsa Chaity-hall

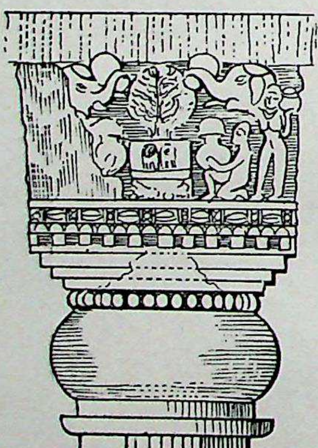


Fig. 60 Pillar in Kanheri Chaitya-hall

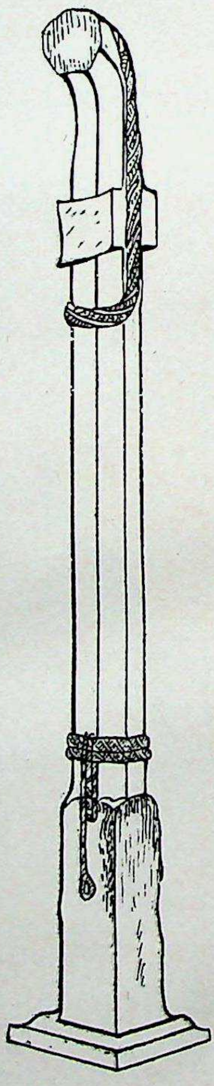


Fig. 61
Stone Yūpa from Mathura



Fig. 62 Pūrṇaghaṭa, Bharhut

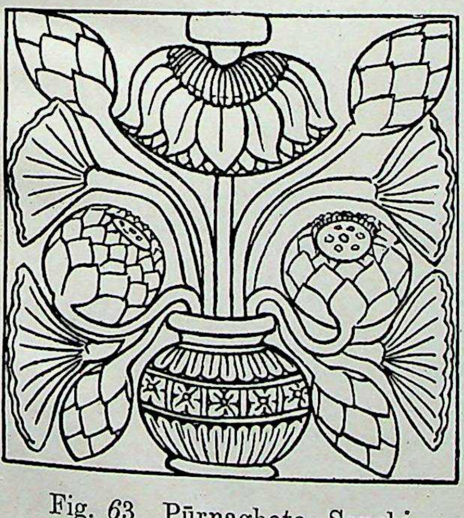


Fig. 63 Pūrṇaghaṭa, Sanchi

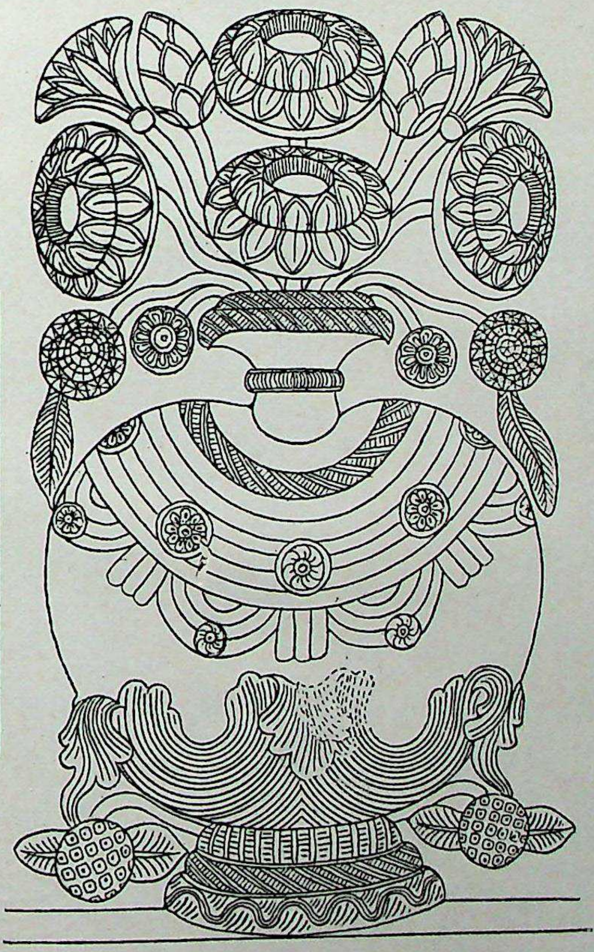


Fig. 65 Pūrṇaghaṭa, Amaravati



Fig. 64 Pūrṇagḥata, Amaravati

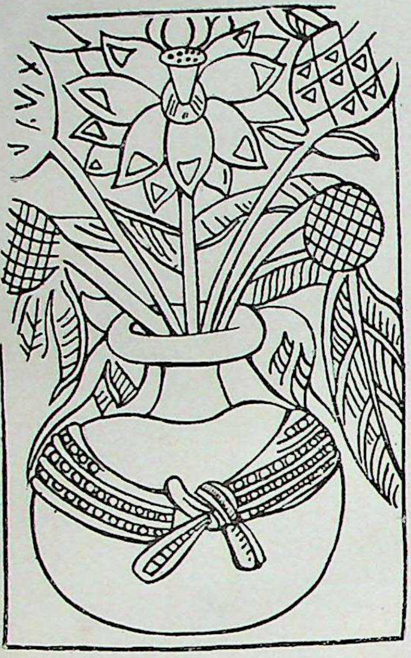


Fig. 66 Pūrṇaghaṭa, Kapisa

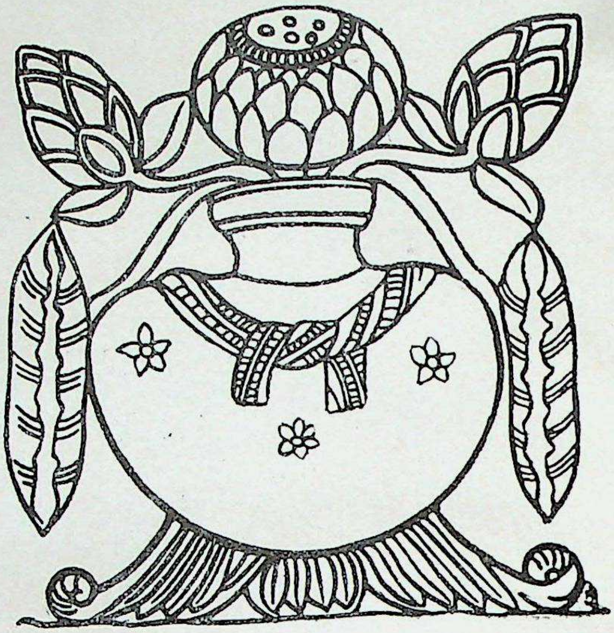


Fig. 67 Pūrṇaghaṭa, Mathura

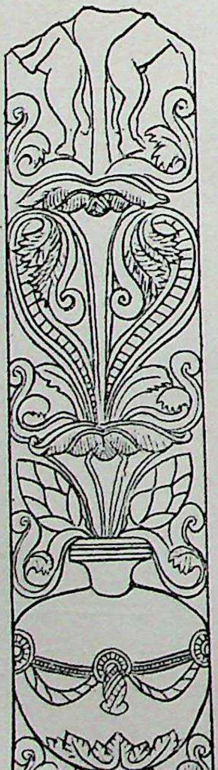


Fig. 68 Pūrṇaghaṭa, Ceylon

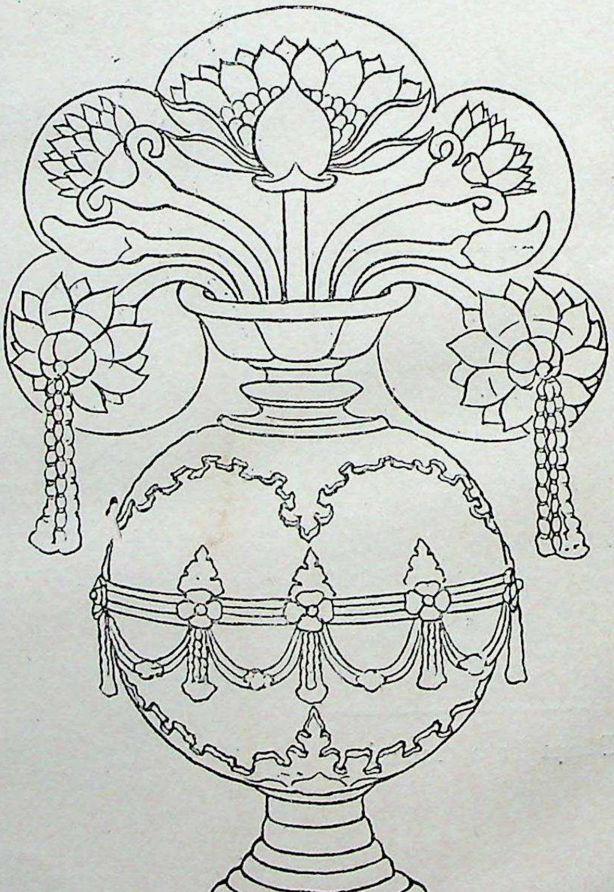


Fig. 68 Pūrṇaghaṭa, Java

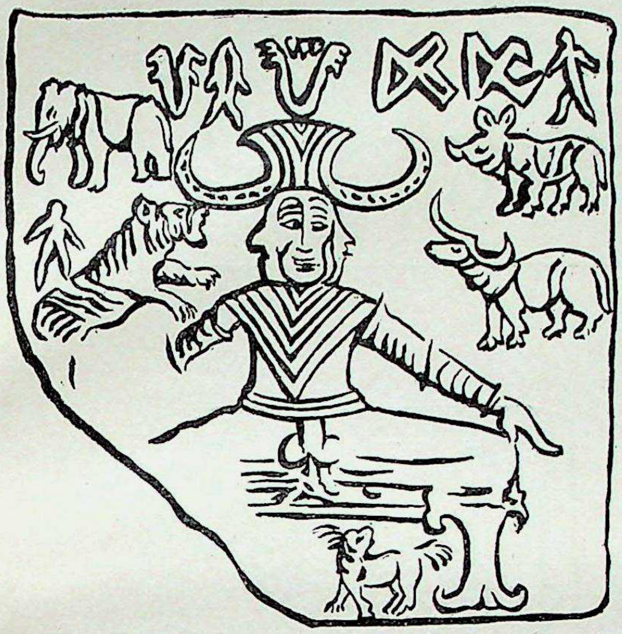


Fig. 72 Seal from Indus Valley

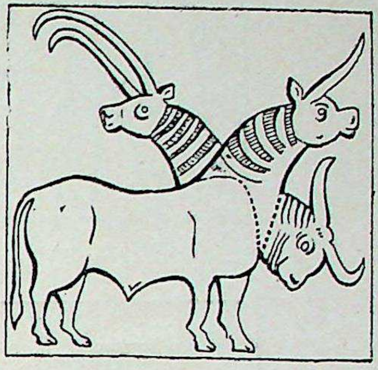


Fig. 71 Composite Animal, Indus Valley

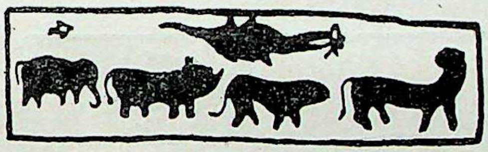


Fig. 70 Four Animals on a Prism, Indus Valley

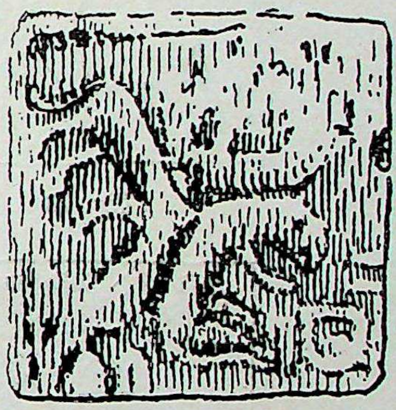


Fig. 73 Composite Animal, Indus Valley

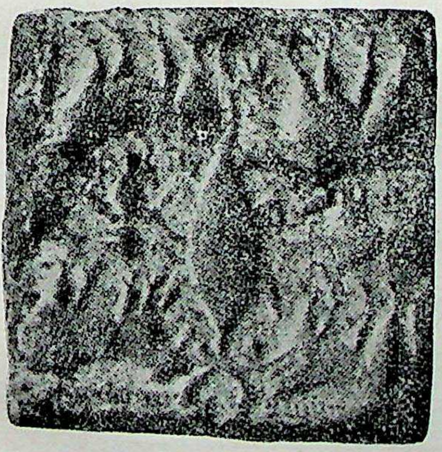


Fig. 74 *a* Four Aimals, Indus Valley

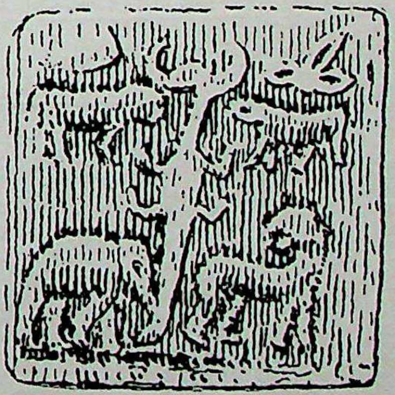


Fig. 74 *b*

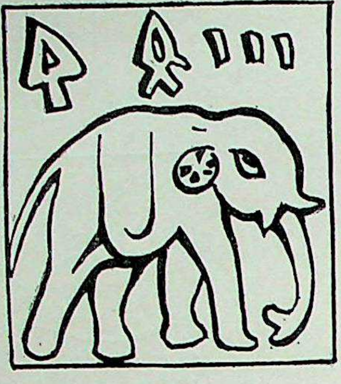
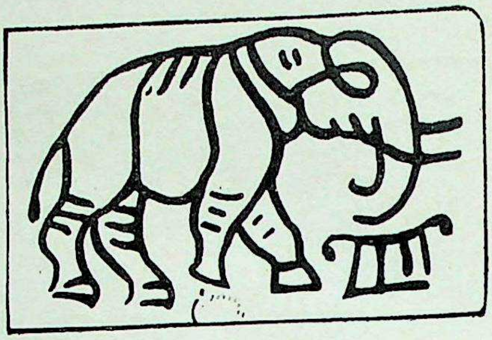


Fig 75



a

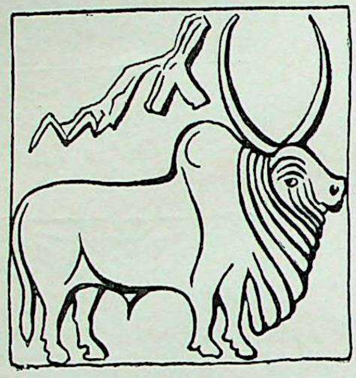
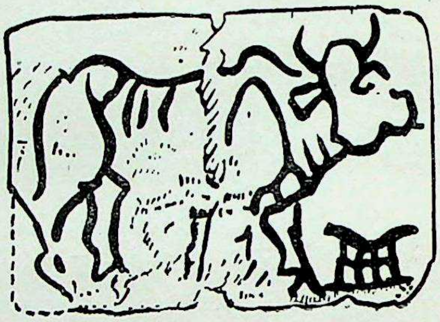


Fig. 76



b

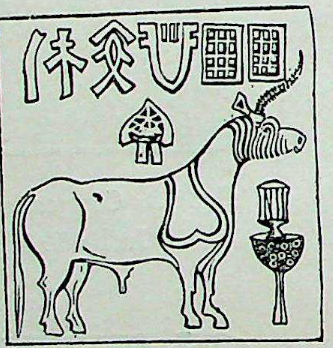
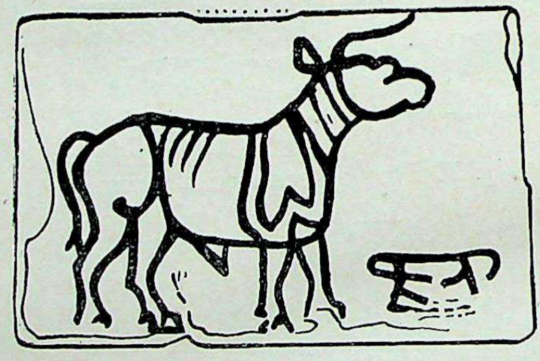
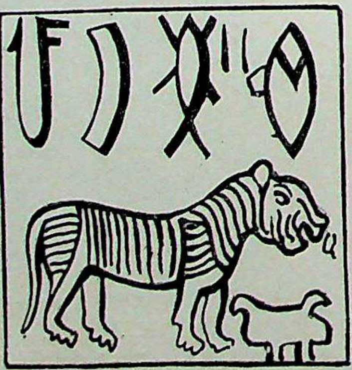
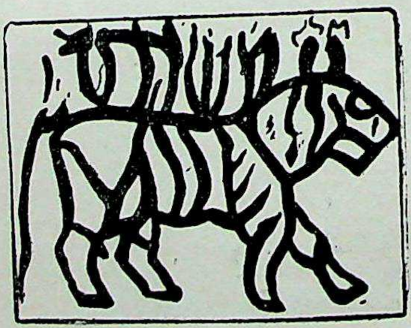


Fig. 77



c





d

Fig. 78
Four Animals on Indus Valley Seals

Fig. 79
Four Animals on Indus Valley Copper Tablets

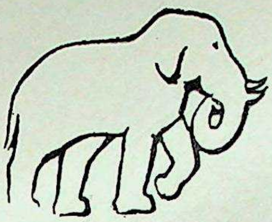


Fig. 80

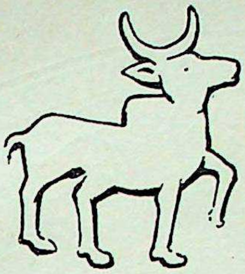


Fig. 81

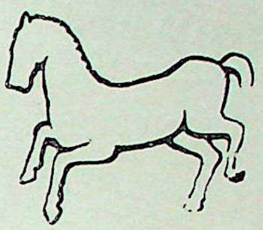


Fig. 82

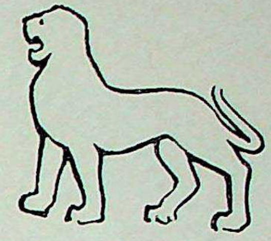


Fig. 83

Four Animals on ancient coins

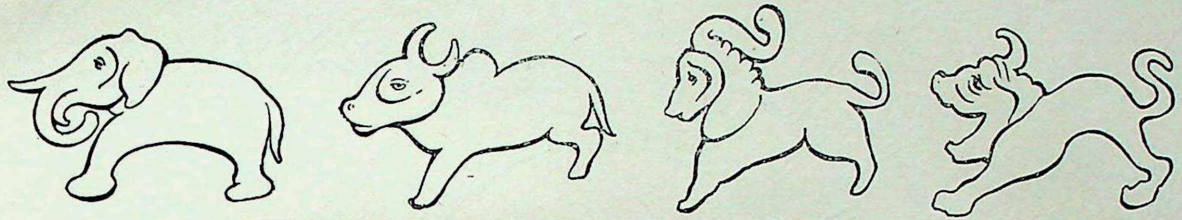


Fig. 84 Four Animals on a Ring-stone

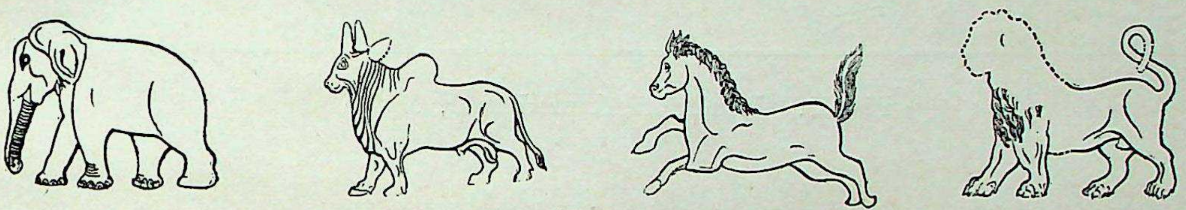


Fig. 85 Four Animals on Sarnath Capital

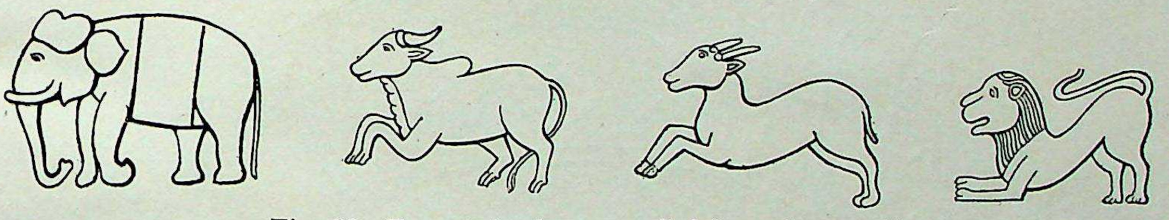


Fig. 86 Four Animals on a relief from Amaravati

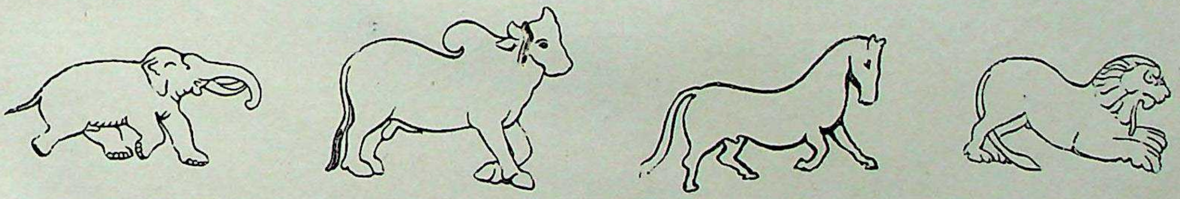


Fig. 87 Four Animals on a moonstone from Nagarjunikonda

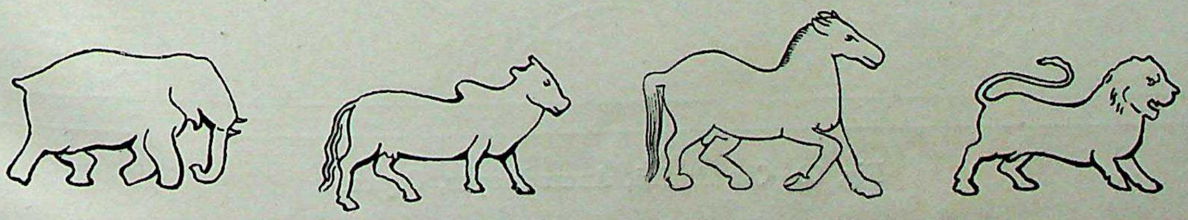


Fig. 88 Four Animals on a moonstone from Anuradhapur, Ceylon

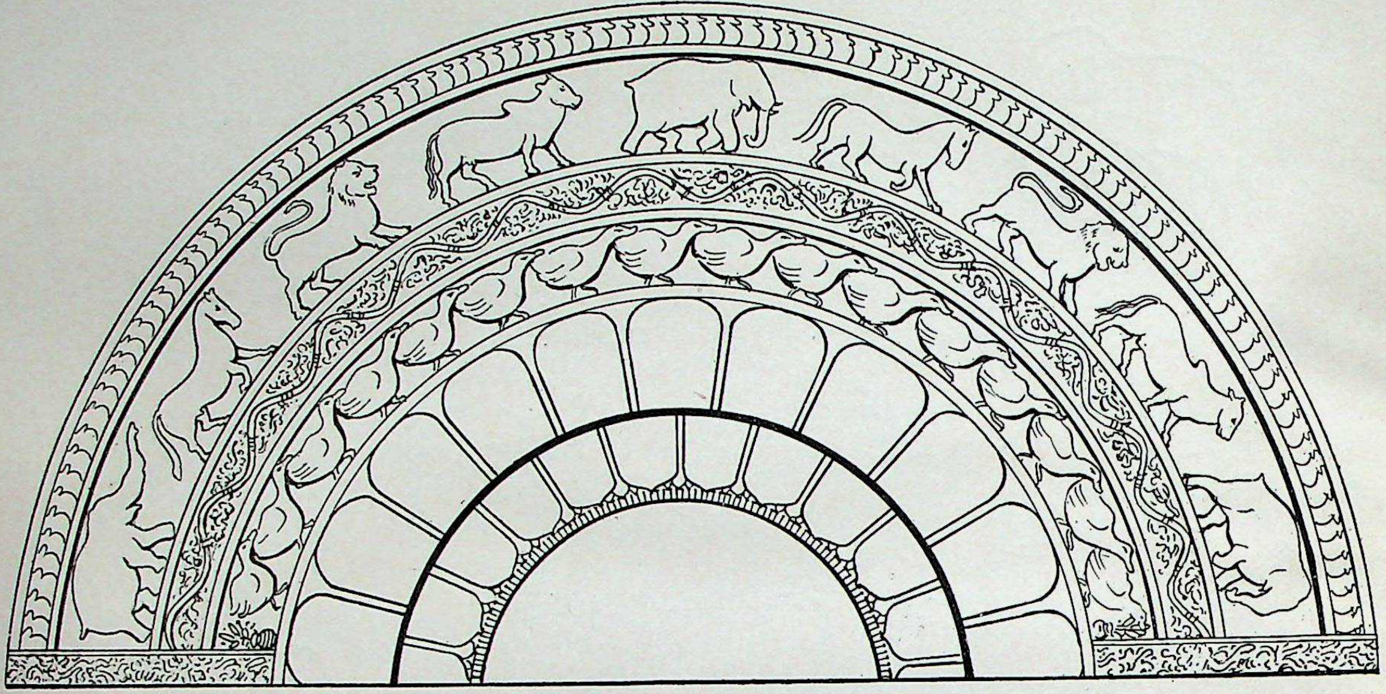
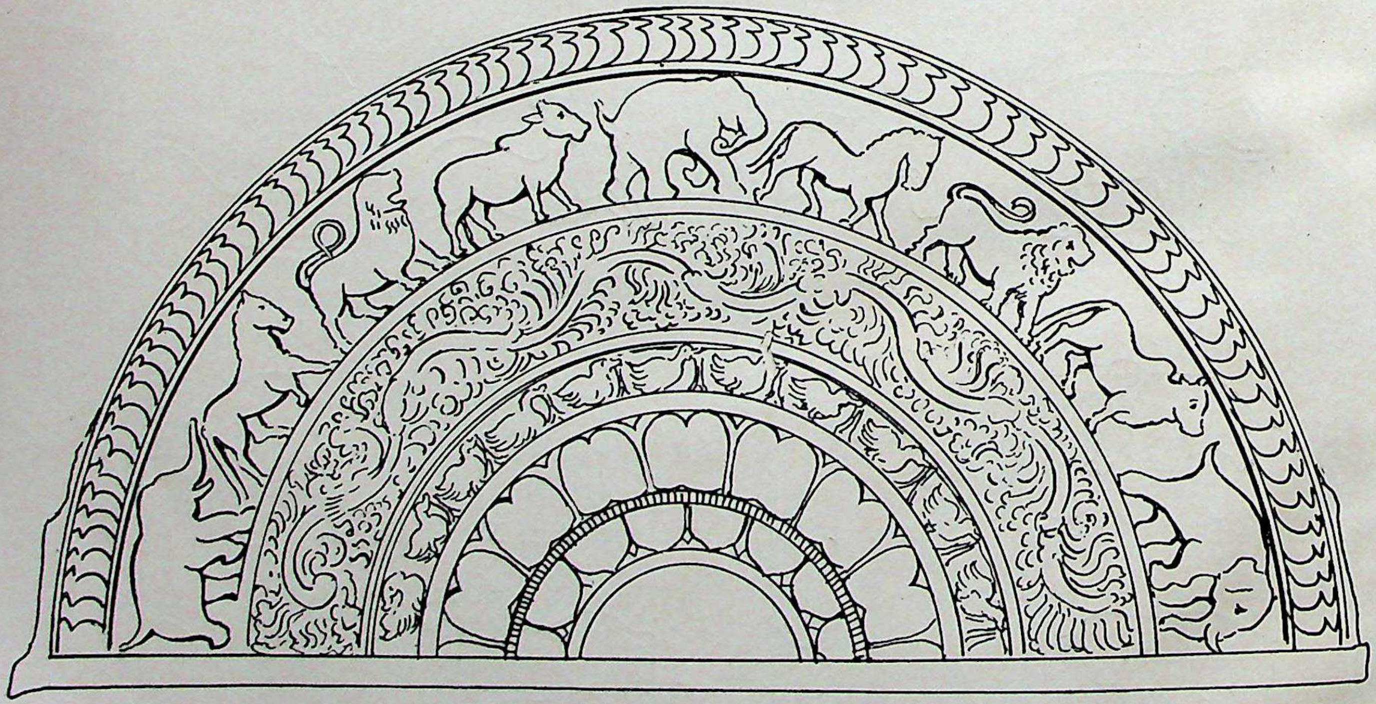


Fig. 89. Chandraśilā, Anuradhapur, Ceylon



Fig, 90 Chandraśilā, Anuradhapur, Ceylon

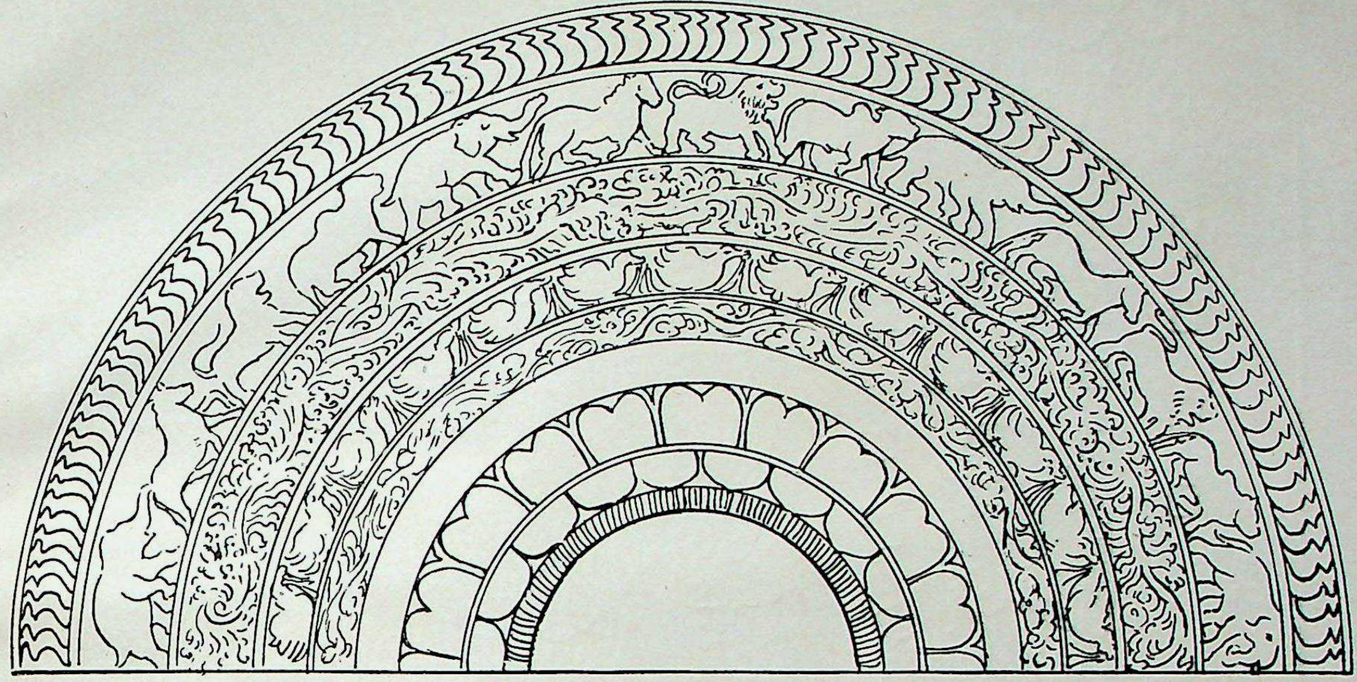


Fig. 91 Chandraśilā, Anuradhapur, Ceylon.

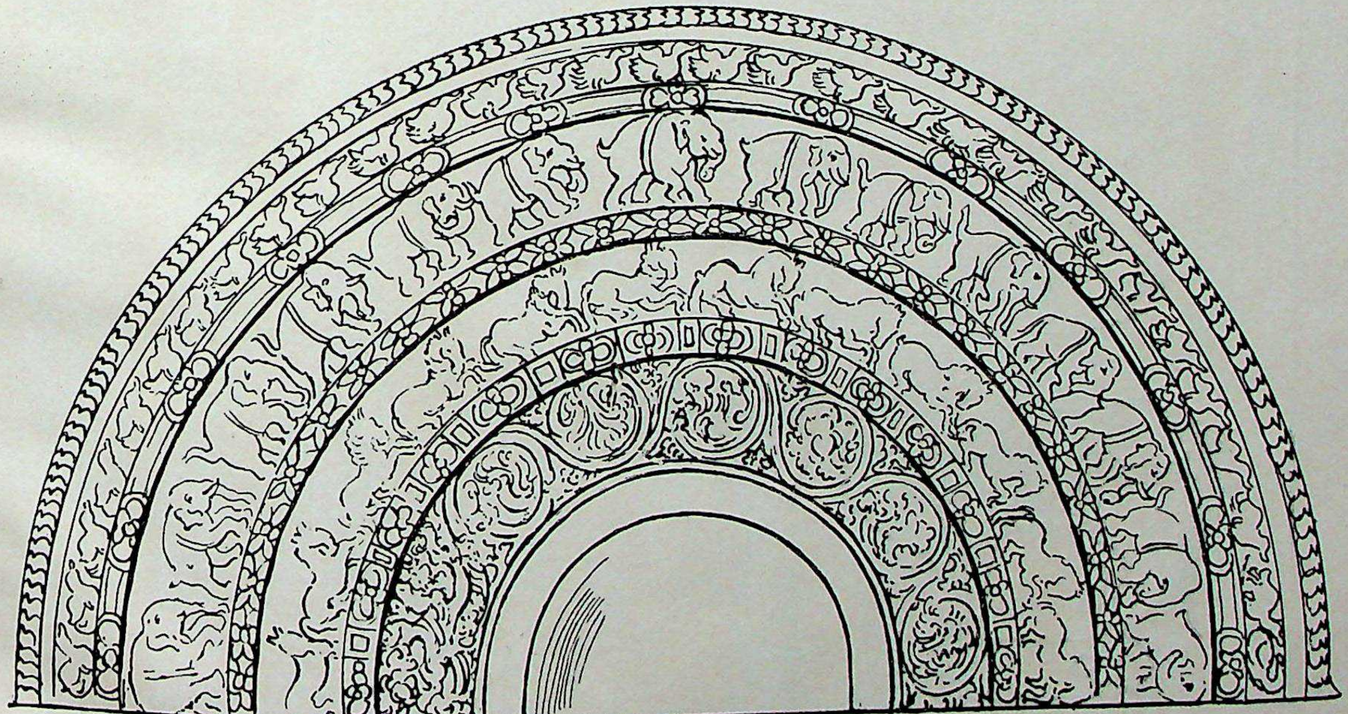


Fig. 92 Chandraśilā, Anuradhapur, Ceylon.

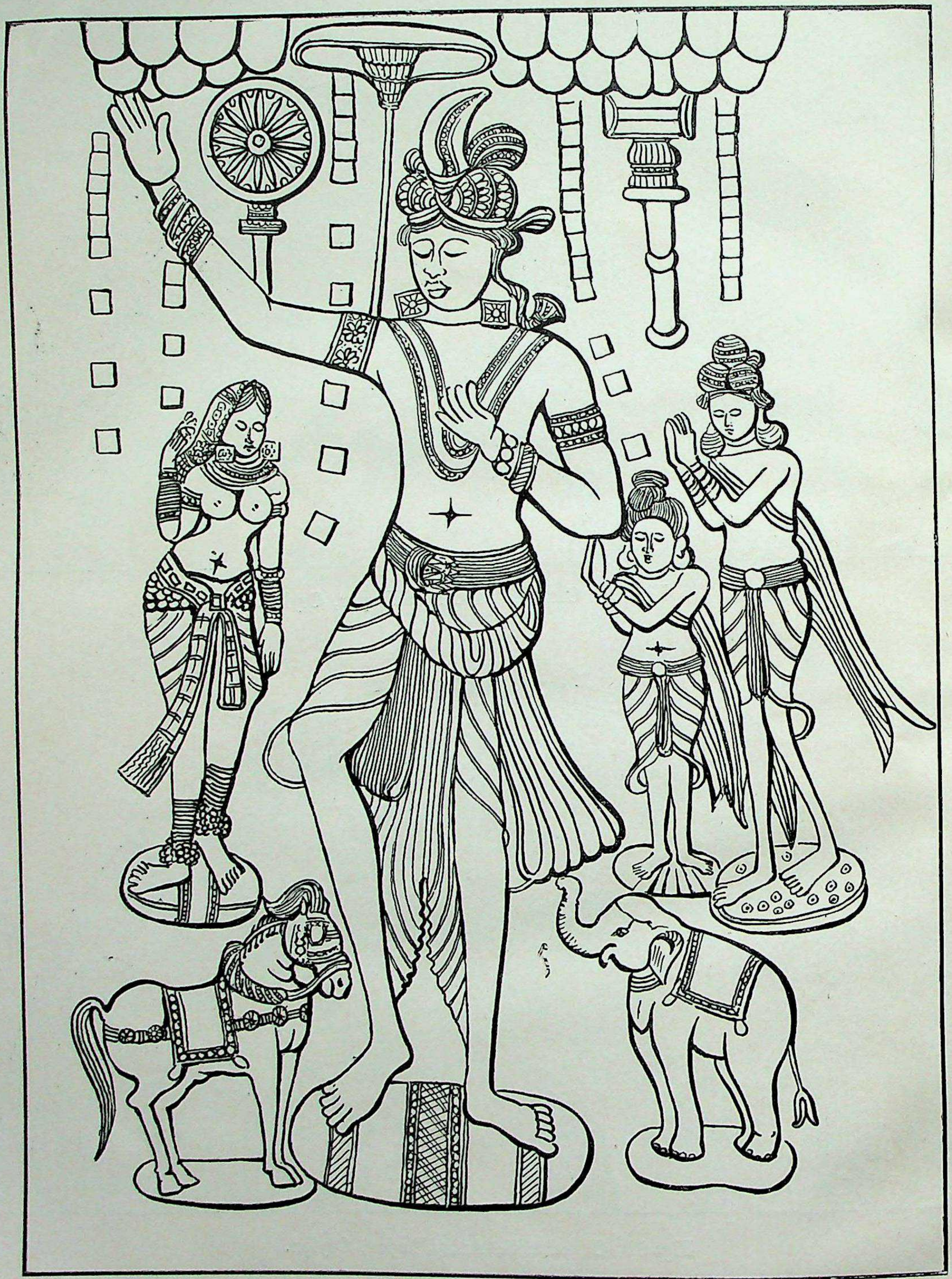


Fig. 97 Chakravartī Panel, Amaravati

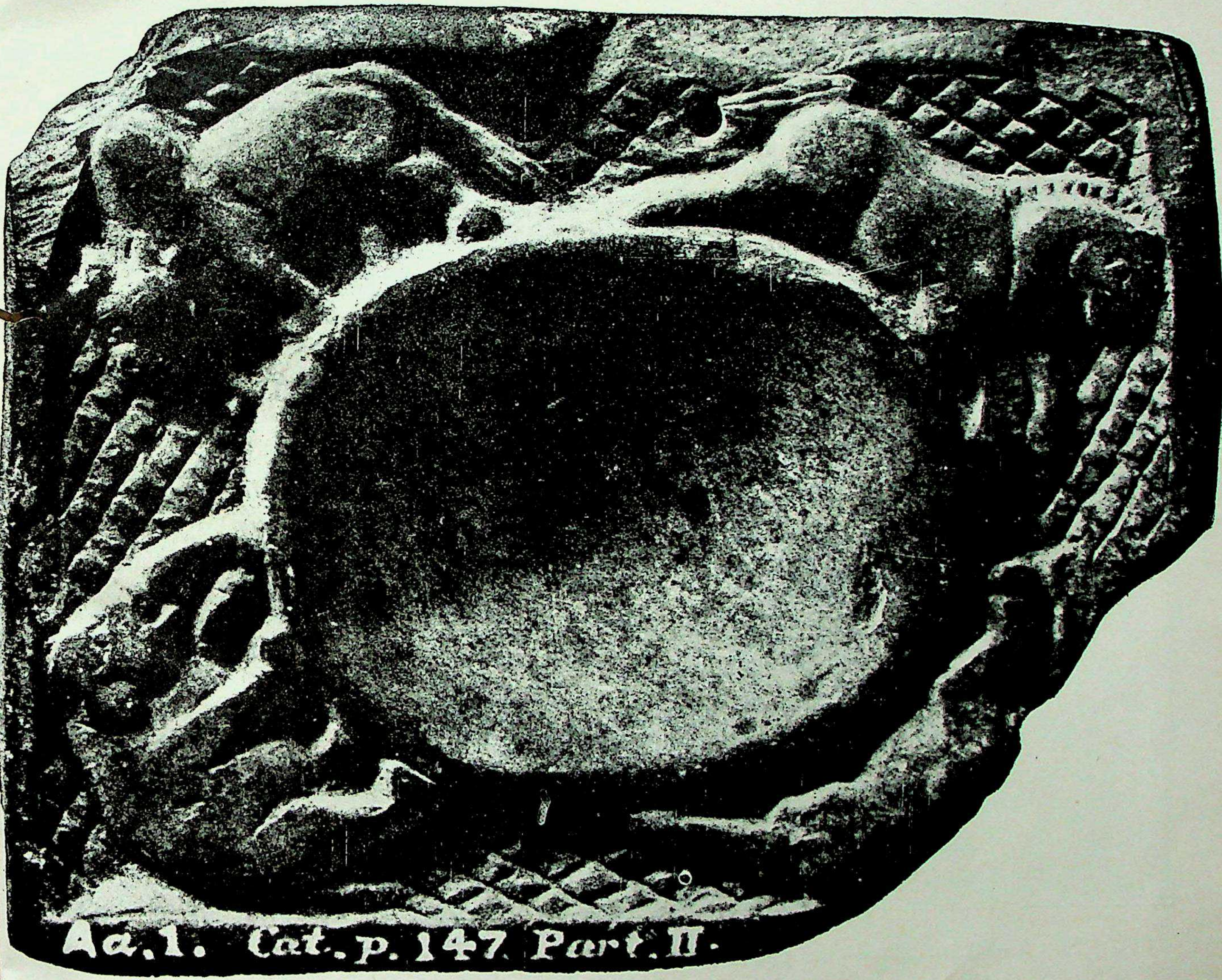


Fig. 93–A steatite plaque showing four animals. From Akra

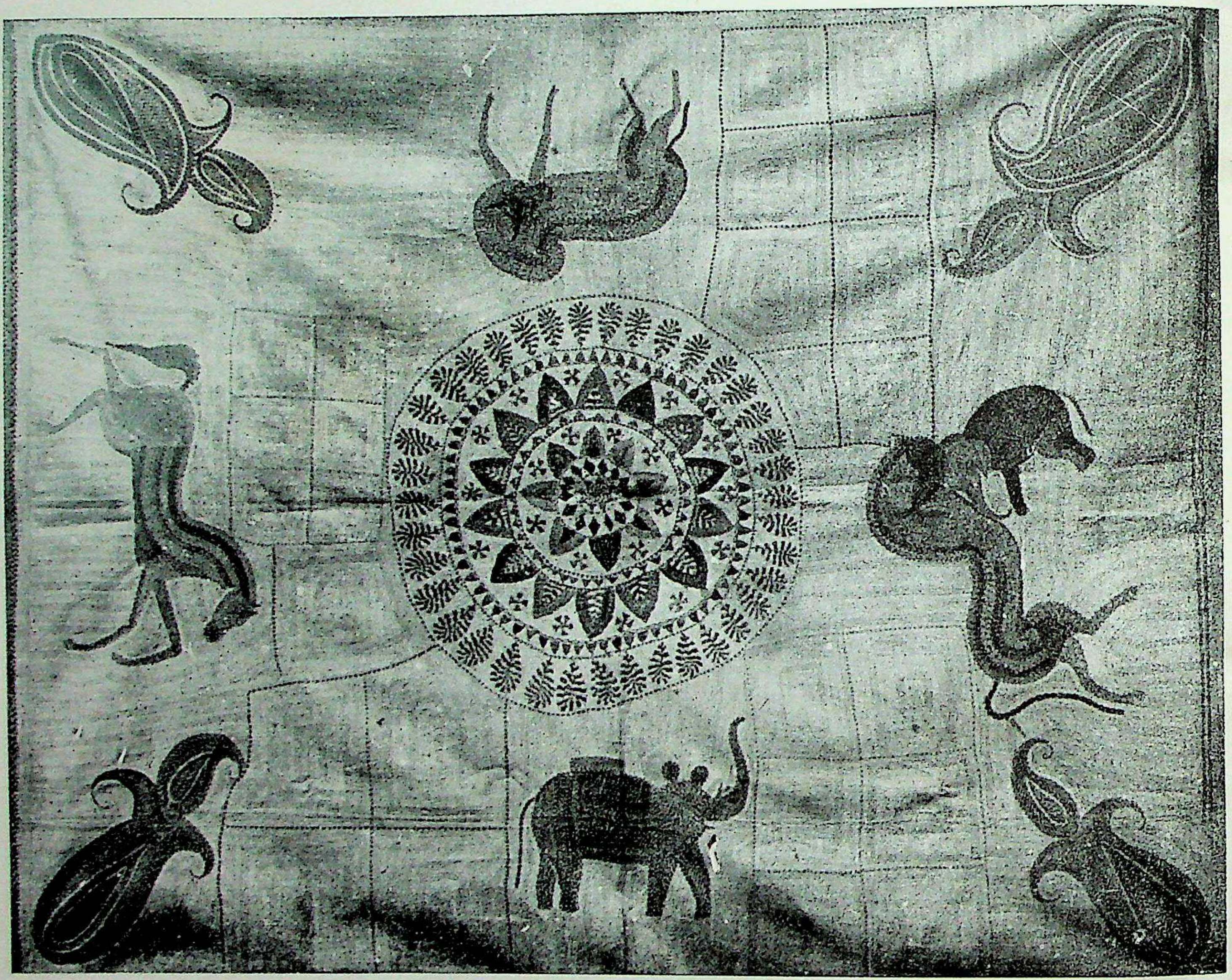


Fig. 95–Four Animals on A Kanthā Cloth, in Bharat Kala Bhavan, 19th Century

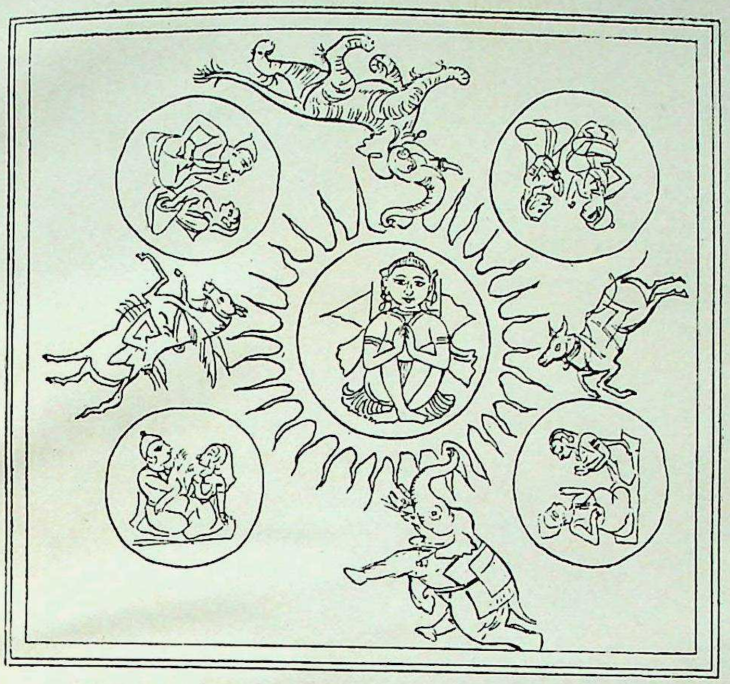


Fig. 94 Rajasthani Painting

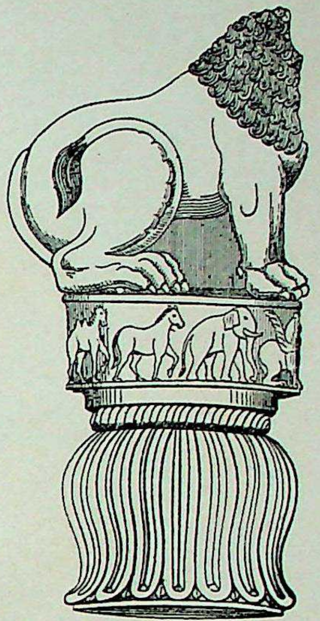
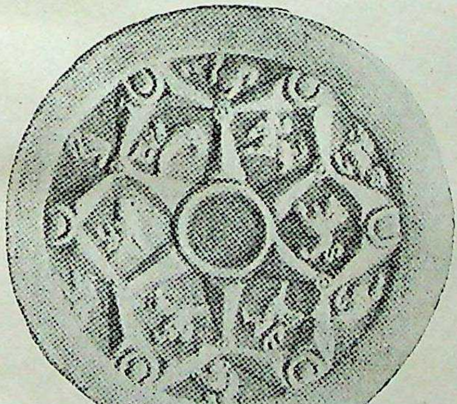


Fig. 100 Lion Capital, Udaigiri



Fgi. 98 Ring-stone



Fig. 96 Stele, Mihintale, Ceylon

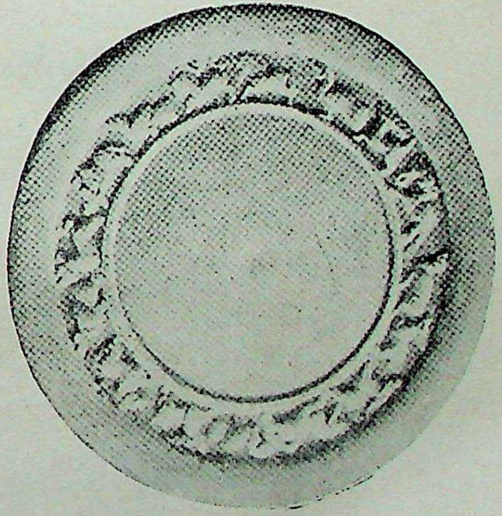


Fig. 99 Ring-stone

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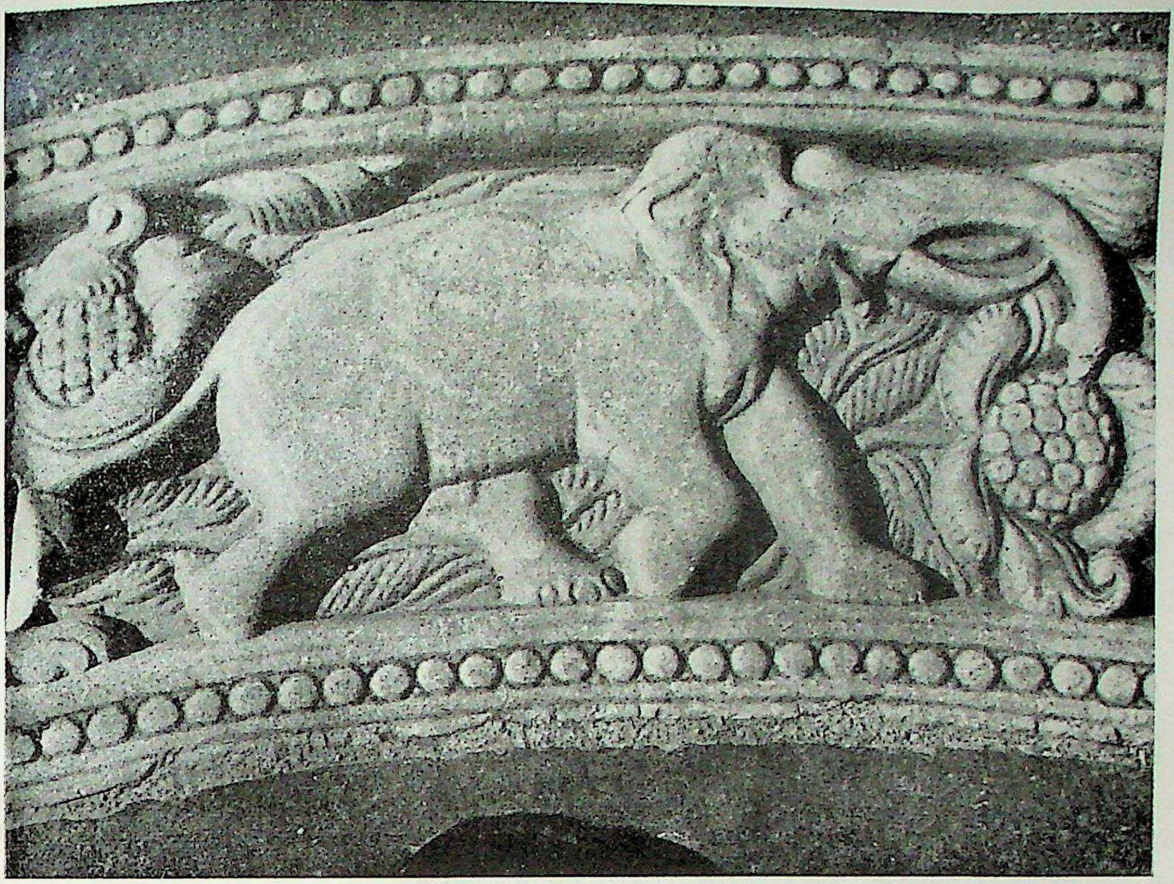


Fig. 101–Elephant on a Moon-stone, Nagarjunikonda

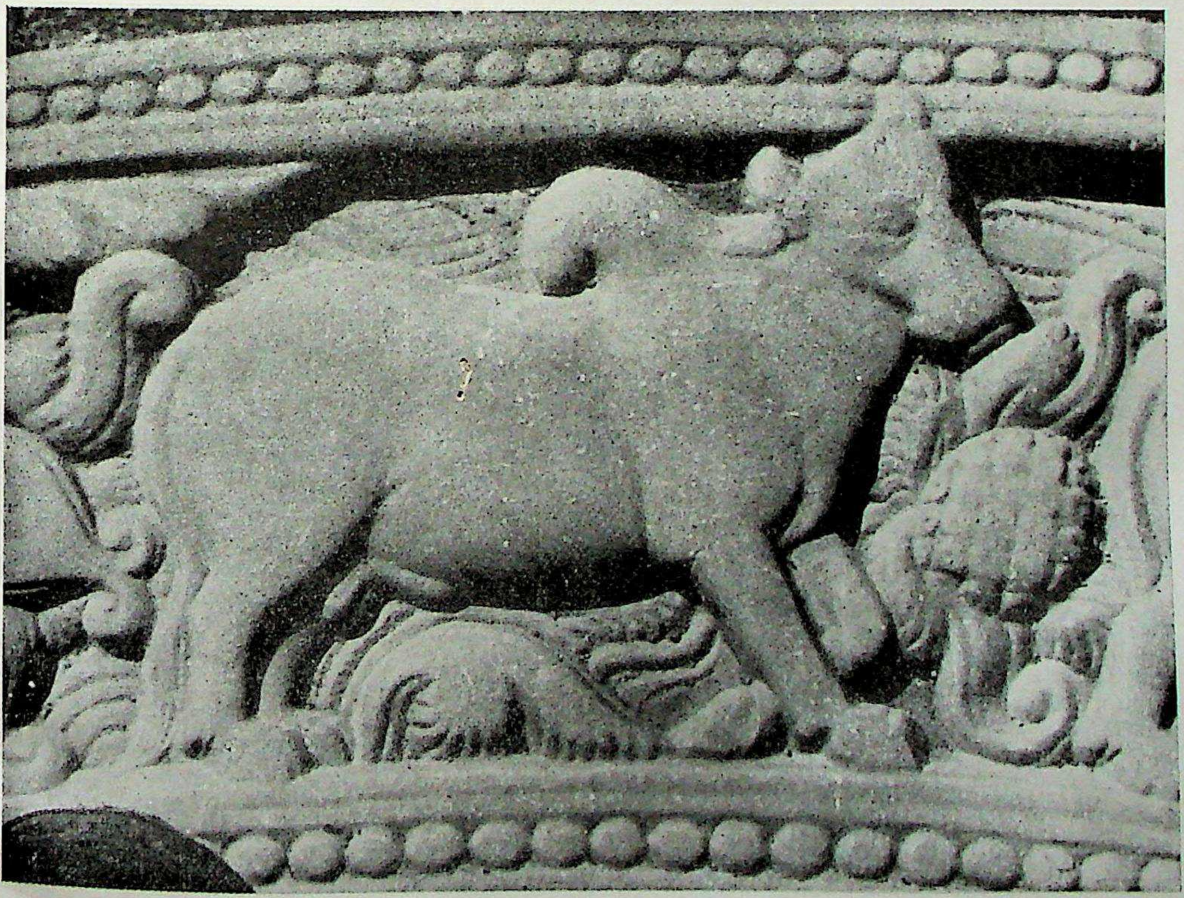


Fig. 102–Bull on a Moon-stone, Nagarjunikonda



Fig. 103–Horse on a Moon-stone, Nagarjunikonda



Fig. 104–Lion on a Moon-stone, Nagarjunikonda

SOME TECHNICAL TERMS